# The Royal Air Force Post World War 1

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**SECOND SUPPLEMENT**

TO

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MONDAY, 8 NOVEMBER, 1920.

*Air Ministry,*
*5th November, 1920*

The Secretary of State for Air has received the following Despatch from Group Captain R Gordon, CMG, DSO, in command of the Royal Air Force Expedition to Somaliland, describing events between September, 1919, and February, 1920:

*Headquarters,*
*Royal Air Force,*
*in Somaliland*
*Berbera,*
*May, 1920*

Sir,

I have the honour to forward a report on the Air side of the operations in Somaliland in January and February, 1920.

These operations consisted of:

(a) An Air Force operation with the assistance of Military Forces.

(b) A Military Operation assisted by the Royal Air Force.

2. Opportunity was taken to test the theory that the moral effect of the new arm, with its power to carry out, without warning, a form of attack against which no counter measures could avail, would so disperse and demoralise the Dervish following that troops would be enabled to capture the Mullah's stock and destroy his forts.

3. The preliminary plan of campaign, as decided on in late September, was to use Las Khorai as a base to raid the Mullah's Headquarters at Jodali and Medishi. At the same time a subsidiary line of operations through Burao and Eil Dab was also agreed on in case the Mullah broke for the interior of the country.

4. The success of the expedition was so dependent on preliminary measures taken that, after a period spent on organising a force in London, I proceeded on 25th October, 1919, with a large portion of my staff to Egypt. After a short stay in that country, I left with my PMO and Aerodrome Construction Officer for Somaliland, and arrived there on 21st November. Since secrecy was essential, it was given out that we were prospecting for oil. On our arrival at Barbera, I proceeded at once to select a suitable site for the Base aerodrome and camp, and make arrangements for the ground so chosen to be levelled and cleared of stones.

5. On November 24th, 1919, accompanied by my PMO and Aerodrome Construction Officer, I proceeded by steamer to Las Khorai with a view to selecting a suitable aerodrome for use as an advanced Base in accordance with my previous plan. After three days' stay there I decided that Las Khorai was not suitable for the purpose for which I had intended it by reason of the great difficulties which would be presented by the landing of stores on the open beach from native boats. In addition the Monsoon blew for six hours practically every day, which, besides absolutely precluding the landing of stores being made on the beach, raised a continuous form of sandstorm some 200 feet high. As the site at Las Khorai which I had reconnoitred might, and actually did, prove of assistance in the case of a forced landing, I established a small stock of petrol and oil there.

6. Having been disappointed in my selection of a suitable site for a good advanced landing ground at Las Khorai, I decided, after conferring with His Excellency the Governor and the Officer Commanding Troops, Somaliland, to proceed to Eil Dur Elan to reconnoitre for a possible advanced Base there. I reached Eil Dur Elan accompanied by an escort of the Camel Corps on December 6th, and discovered a suitable site about half a mile from a supply of running water.

7. In order to provide for the alternative line from which it was decided to operate should the Mullah escape south to his mountain fortress at Tale after having been ousted from the north of the country, I had sites reconnoitred at Burao and Eil Dab, and work of preparation commenced.

8. As preparation on both the Eil Dur Elan and Burao Eil Dab lines were so well advanced by December 12th, I decided to cable at once for the main body of the expedition, which was assembling in Egypt, to be sent on to Berbera in HMS "Ark Royal". This aeroplane-carrying ship had been lent by the Admiralty for the purpose of transporting the personnel and aeroplanes in one complete shipment – a feat which would otherwise have been impossible.

9. HMS "Ark Royal" left Alexandria on December 21st and arrived at Berbera on December 30th, 1919, and unloading was commenced at once. As the facilities for handling ships' cargoes at Berbera were of the most primitive nature, recourse had to be made to various improvised means. A large open lighter, completely decked in with ships' hatches, proved invaluable for the unloading of aeroplanes and vehicles, and, thanks to the whole-hearted assistance rendered by Commander P Waterer, RN, and the ship's company of HMS "Ark Royal", the whole of the aircraft material, transport and stores was discharged in a very short space of time.

10. The erection of the aeroplanes was commenced on the 1st January, 1920, and by the 8th of January the first three were tested in the air.

11. The Director of Public Works, Somaliland, rendered invaluable service by making the camel tracks from Berbera to Las Dureh fit for light motor vehicles, and by the 17th the aerodrome at Eil Dur Elan was complete with stores and personnel except for those who were to fly from Berbera.

12. The eight aeroplanes which had been erected started by air from Berbera for Eil Dur Elan on January 19th, but one had to turn back owing to engine trouble, and eventually arrived the next day. By January 20th, therefore, everything was ready for the operations, which were timed to commence on January 21st.

13. The first raid was carried out on January 21st by six machines from Eil Dur Elan against the Mullah's hutments and stock in the Medishi area. By reason of clouds four machines failed to reach Medishi, but bombed Jid Ali Fort and stock in the surrounding country with good results. One machine found Medishi successfully, and bombed the encampment there. The remaining machine, however, was forced to land through engine trouble at Las Khorai, on the sea coast.

It was afterwards confirmed that the bombs dropped by the machine which attacked Medishi killed the Amir, on whom the Mullah was leaning, and actually singed the Mullah's clothes.

14. Combined operations were carried out during January 25th, 26th, 27th, and up till 30th, and consisted chiefly in keeping touch with the two portions of the Somaliland Field Force: (a) The Somaliland Camel Corps, with one and a half companies of 101st Grenadiers (Indian Army), operating from El Afweina in an easterly direction; and (b) the Somaliland Camel Corps who were advancing in a westerly direction from the neighbourhood of Mussa Aled some 45 miles to the north-west of Jid Ali.

Keeping touch consisted of locating the troops of each force and communicating their position by dropping messages on the Officer Commanding the Somaliland Field Force, and also in conveying despatches between the commanders of the two forces and the headquarters of the Somaliland Field Force, to which end temporary landing grounds had been constructed at El Afweina and Las Khorai. By this speedy means of communication the movements of the two forces were co-ordinated and information was rapidly passed.

Latterly, after its capture by the King's African Rifles on 24th January, machines were able to land at Baran, at which place the headquarters of the King's African Rifle force were established.

In addition, close reconnaissance of Medishi and Jid Ali was continued, bombs were dropped and machine-gun fire directed on the small isolated bodies of Dervishes and stock which were located in the vicinity. After the very slightest resistance, followed by the head-long flight of its defenders, Jid Ali Fort fell on 28th January to the King's African Rifles. The bombing from the air and latterly the Stokes gun bombardment had been too much for them.

On 29th January, Galibariboa Fort, built on the lines of Jid Ali Fort, was bombed, together with the native huts which surrounded it. Some stock was observed, but few Dervishes.

On January 30th, an important Dervish Sheik gave himself up at Jid Ali, and, at the same time, reported that the Mullah had broken south on 29th January, and was making for his mountain fortress at Tale. The Mullah had, therefore, eluded the net which the Camel Corps, operating from El Afweina, had set for him. The Officer Commanding the Somaliland Field Force at once decided to give chase, and I took immediate steps to arrange the most effective co-operation by the Air Force in this plan.

15. I had previously prepared an advanced base at El Afweina in case operations should move south into this part of the country, and I now placed it in full commission. Aeroplanes which left Eil Dur Elan on 31st January on reconnaissance were ordered to land there.

On this day the ponies belonging to the Mullah's baggage column were located near Daringahuje and attacked by aeroplane with bombs and machine-gun fire. Numerous ponies were killed and the remainder stampeded in a northerly direction. Deserters who came in afterwards reported that this column which had been attacked consisted of the Mullah's own personal following, consisting of most of his headmen, his wives and his sons, and it was the greatest piece of misfortune that the Mullah himself was not located and hit on this occasion, as he was about three miles away hiding in a nullah.

On 1st February, the Camel Corps arrived at El Afweina, and continued in pursuit of the Mullah. The first air reconnaissance over Tale fortress was carried out on this day, and a large Dervish convoy, estimated at 1,500 camels, burden and otherwise, 500 heads of cattle, and 500 sheep and goats was attacked with machine-gun fire and bombs, about five miles north of Berwaise.

The convoy was thrown into complete confusion, and set off in disorder in an easterly direction; its location being reported by dropping a message containing the information to the Camel Corps, who were then some ten miles distant to westward.

Touch was now established by aeroplane with the friendlies under Captain Gibb, who were operating against Tale from the neighbourhood of Gaolo, some fifteen miles to the south-west of Tale. This was a most important task, since the friendlies were quite in the dark as to what was happening in the north: efficient co-operation between detached forces has always been the greatest difficulty which military expeditions in Somaliland have had to contend with in the past owing to the lack of means of communication.

The hospital aeroplane, with which the expedition was supplied, was first employed on this day in conveying an officer who was seriously ill from El Afweina to Eil Dur Elan, where he was successfully operated upon.

The next day was spent in reconnaissance and in carrying information to Captain Gibb and his friendlies at Duhung to keep a look-out for the Mullah, who was still reported to be on his way south, and the following day in preparing the aeroplanes for a big raid on Tale Fortress. On 4th February, three aeroplanes left El Afweina to bomb Tale Fortress. Three direct hits with 112lb bombs and four direct hits with 20lb bombs were obtained on the large fort itself, and one direct hit with a 20lb bomb on the Mullah's private fort, situated outside the perimeter of the large fort. Waabs, or native hutments, outside the forts were set on fire with incendiary bombs, and, fanned by the north-easterly wind, the conflagration became general. In addition, the inhabitants of the waabs and the forts were heavily and effectively engaged with machine-gun fire.

16. For the next few days after this only reconnaissance and inter-communication work between the various detachments of the Somaliland Field Force, which was still in pursuit, were carried out in order to give them time to close in on Tale and reap the fruits which, after our experience of the results of bombing Jid Ali and Medishi, might reasonably be expected from further bombing attacks.

These were, however, rendered unnecessary, since Captain Gibb's friendlies intercepted the Mullah's convoy and rushed and captured Tale, while the Camel Corps, in a magnificent pursuit, destroyed the Mullah's personal following, which had escaped from that fortress.

With this striking success the campaign was ended, and, on 18th February, the machines flew back to Berbera.

17. The demoralisation caused by the suddenness of attack from the air was vividly exemplified by the comparison which can be drawn from the taking of Baran Fort by the King's African Rifles, and the precipitate flight of the Dervishes from the fortresses of Medishi and Jid Ali after they had been bombed.

In the former case Baran was not subjected to an air attack, and only fell to the King's African Rifles when surrounded and heavily bombarded with Stokes guns, and not until the last defender was killed. Medishi and Jid Ali, on the other hand, stronger forts in every way than Baran, were abandoned almost immediately after the air attacks. The utter demoralisation caused is further typified by the fact that quantities of rifles were left behind – an absolutely unheard-of occurrence in any former campaign against the Dervishes.

Tale itself, a fortress which would have otherwise cost many lives, and occupied a long time to take, fell in practically as simple a manner.

18. It is noteworthy that two days after the fall of Tale, which is a mountain fortress some 270 miles south-west of Berbera, His Excellency the Governor of Somaliland was conveyed there by aeroplane, and was thus enabled to thank the friendlies for their excellent work during the operations, and also to discuss with them on the spot matters of administrative and political importance. This exhibition of the potentialities of aircraft created the most profound impression on all the Akils and tribal leaders assembled there.

19. I wish to acknowledge the help and sympathetic support which I always received from His Excellency the Governor of Somaliland, who invariably showed the utmost resource and energy in assisting me with the solution of the many and varied problems with which I was confronted. My relations with the Somaliland Field Force were of the utmost cordial nature throughout, and I am deeply indebted to Colonel G H Summers for the assistance which, through his long experience of Somaliland and its peculiar conditions, he accorded me at all times. The constant understanding which prevailed between us was a most important factor in the attainment of smooth working throughout, and particularly in the combined operations which followed in the air attack.

The success achieved by the Air Force engaged in these operations I owe to the zeal and efficiency of my staff, and to the unfailing loyalty and support of all officers and men under my command. The conditions under which the Air Force were operating were unique, and that the many difficulties were successfully overcome is a tribute to all concerned. I have already submitted under a separate cover the names of the officers and other ranks of the Royal Air Force whose services I would specially bring to your notice.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Sd) R GORDON,
Group Captain,
Commanding "Z" Unit, Royal Air Force

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A modified DH9 being used to transport a stretcher-bound casualty with "Z" Force in Somaliland, during 1919

# OPERATIONS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AGAINST AFGHANISTAN 4th to 31st MAY, 1919

The information that the Afghans were about to declare Jehad was received from the North West Frontier on the 3rd May, 1919, and on the following day No. 31 Squadron was ordered to have two aircraft in readiness to take part in suppressing any aggressive movement on the part of the Afghans. When hostilities were formally declared on the 6th May, Lt. Col. F.F. Minchin, DSO, MC, who was commanding the 52nd Wing located at Murree, proceeded to Peshawar to confer with the Commander of the North West Frontier Force. Major E.L. Millar, MBE, Commanding Officer of No. 31 Squadron was temporarily attached as Liaison Officer to this force.

The Afghan forces attacked on three fronts, at Dakka, Khost and Quetta. The 52nd Wing operated in the Dakka and Khost areas, and a flight of No. 114 Squadron was engaged on the Quetta front. On the 6th May, three aircraft carried out a reconnaissance on the Afghan side of the border, and returned with several bullet holes; the height of the hills over which aircraft flew bringing them within easy range of the snipers of the Afridi tribes. The outstanding feature of the early days of hostilities was a very thorough and effective raid on Loe Dakka, apparently the advanced base of the Afghan troops in the hills about the west mouth of the Khyber Pass. In this raid 1¼ tons of bombs were dropped and 1151 rounds of ammunition were fired. Enemy casualties numbered about 600 men, the C. in C. being wounded and his brother a Mullah and the Nalik being among the killed.

On the 17th May all aircraft capable of being flown from Risalpur to Jalalabad were employed in a bombing raid. 332 bombs were dropped, mainly on enemy troops in the ridge and the rest on Jalalabad, which was heavily bombed again on the 20th and 24th May. Reports of the destruction of Jalalabad are believed to have induced large enemy forces to retire from the Dakka front without taking any offensive action. Captain Halley, with a crew of four, made a successful flight to Kabul, on the 24th May, in the Handley Page aircraft which had been flown from England to India. 20 bombs were dropped, 4 of which scored hits on the Amir's Palace. A fresh development occurred involving most of the southern tribes of the Buffer States, on the 26th May, and aircraft had to be despatched from Risalpur to Kohat. The pilots carried out their tasks so effectively, that the Afghan General was soon deprived of the support of the tribes, who live in dread of aircraft, and was driven off. Our troops attacked Spin Baldak Fort, which had to be bombarded for about 6 hours before it was captured. Aircraft operating from Chaman, near Quetta, observed this and dropped 20 bombs and fired several drums of S.A.A. into the fort.

Aircraft carrying out raids in the vicinity of Thal on the 28th and 29th to shake the morale of the enemy, found many targets and inflicted considerable casualties. The following day reconnaissance reported that the camps were apparently deserted. On the 1st June, four aircraft successfully co-operated with the Thal relieving column, and by 10 A.M. Thal was relieved. The G.O.C. later expressed his appreciation of the work performed by the R.A.F.

As a result of this co-operation the Amir Amanulla finally made a request to the Viceroy for an Armistice.

**SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.**

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|---|---|
| Total number of hours flown | 693 hours. |
| Weight of bombs dropped | 20868 lbs. |
| Total number of rounds of S.A.A. fired | 9315 |
| Artillery co-operation flights | 4 |
| Contact patrols | 2 |

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# ROYAL AIR FORCE

## PERMANENT ORGANIZATION OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

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## Note by the Secretary of State for Air on a Scheme Outlined by the Chief of the Air Staff

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# AN OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME FOR THE PERMANENT ORGANIZTION OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

## NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR

The scheme outlined in the following memorandum on the permanent organization of the Royal Air Force has been prepared during the course of the present year under my directions by the Chief of the Air Staff, and has in principle received the approval of the Cabinet.

The many complications of the Air Service and its intricate technical organization are not perhaps fully appreciated, even by those who take a general interest in the subject. It therefore appears desirable to lay this memorandum in both Houses of Parliament, in order that they may understand the character of the problem and the complications that are being faced.

It should be added that the financial provision which the Cabinet have approved as governing the scale of the Royal Air Force during the next few years is approximately 15 million pounds per annum. It is upon this basis that this scheme has been prepared, and it is upon this basis that it is hoped the Estimates of next year will, apart from any extraordinary expenditure which the military situation may render necessary, be framed.

WINSTON S CHURCHILL

*11th December, 1919.*

## MEMORANDUM BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

1. *The problem confronting us.* The problem of forming the Royal Air Force on a peace basis differs in many essentials from that which confronts the older services. The Royal Air Force was formed by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service, and one may say, broadly speaking, that the whole Service was practically a war creation on a temporary basis, without any possibility of taking into account that it was going to remain on a permanent basis. The personnel with few exceptions was enlisted for the duration of the war, and put through an intensive but necessarily hurried course of training. Material was created in vast quantities, but rapid development often rendered it obsolete almost before it had reached the stage of bulk production. The accommodation provided had perforce to be of an entirely temporary character. The force may in fact be compared to the prophet Jonah's gourd. The necessity of war created it in a night, but the economies of peace have to a large extent caused it to wither in a day, and we are now faced with the necessity of replacing it with a plant of deeper root. As in nature, however, decay fosters growth, and the new plant has a fruitful soil from which to spring.

The principle to be kept in mind in forming the framework of the Air Service is that in the future the main portion of it will consist of an Independent Force, together with Service personnel required in carrying out Aeronautical Research.

In addition there will be a small part of it specially trained for work with the Navy, and a small part specially trained for work with the Army, these two small portions probably becoming, in the future, an arm of the older services.

It may be that the main portion, the Independent Air Force, will grow larger and larger, and become more and more the predominating factor in all types of warfare.

2. *Governing principles.* In planning the formation of the peacetime Royal Air Force it has been assumed that no need will arise for some years at least for anything in the nature of general mobilization. It has been possible therefore to concentrate attention on providing for the needs of the moment as far as they can be foreseen and on laying the foundations of a highly-trained and efficient force which, though not capable of expansion in its present form, can be made so without any drastic alteration should necessity arise in years to come. Broadly speaking, the principle has been to reduce service squadrons to the minimum considered essential for our garrisons overseas with a very small number in the United Kingdom as a reserve, and to concentrate the whole of the remainder of our resources on perfecting the training of officers and men.

It is intended to preserve the numbers of some of the great squadrons who have made names for themselves during the war, in permanent service units with definite identity, which will be the homes of the officers belonging to them, and will have the traditions of the war to look back upon.

There will be found in the Appendix a statement showing detailed particulars of squadrons, stations, schools, depots etc, which it is hoped to provide in the next three years at home and abroad. It will be understood that this programme is to be regarded as provisional only.

3. *Service units.* It is proposed to provide 8 squadrons for India and 3 for Mesopotamia, with the necessary facilities for repair. As regards India this is in accordance with a proposal put forward from India and now under consideration by the Government of India. The cost of the units in India will fall on the Government of India on exactly the same basis as in the case of the military garrison. Recent events have shown the value of aircraft in dealing with frontier troubles, and it is not perhaps too much to hope that before long it may prove possible to regard the Royal Air Force units not as an addition to the military garrison but as a substitute for part of it. One great advantage of aircraft in the class of warfare approximating to police work is their power of acting at once. Aircraft can visit the scene of incipient unrest within a comparatively few hours of the receipt of news. To organize a military expedition even on a small scale takes time, and delay may result in the trouble spreading. The cost is also much greater, and very many more lives are involved.

In Egypt it is proposed to station 7 service squadrons. Under existing conditions in that country aircraft are a most valuable means of communication. Distances are long and ground

communication confined to a few main routes. On the other hand the country and the climate are both ideal for flying. From a wider aspect Egypt is the Clapham Junction of the air between east and west, and is situated within comparatively easy reach of the most probable centres of unrest, and this added to its natural advantages for aviation, makes it the obvious locality for a small Royal Air Force reserve.

As regards our Naval bases and important coaling stations overseas, future developments will almost certainly lead to the necessity of providing aircraft as part of their garrisons, but in the majority of cases the need of this is not urgent under existing conditions, and for the present it is only proposed to station a small seaplane unit at Malta, and a similar unit in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably at Alexandria.

The Service squadrons quartered in the United Kingdom apart from those for co-operation with the Army and Navy will eventually number four, but not more than two of these squadrons will be formed in the next financial year. These squadrons will be employed on communication and similar duties in peace and will form a small reserve in case of need.
For co-operation with the Army it is proposed to provide eventually squadrons on the basis of a flight per division for work with the troops at all stages of their training, and in addition one or more squadrons for co-operation with the artillery both during their winter training and their annual gun practice. During the next financial year it is proposed to form two squadrons in all, one at Farnborough for co-operation with the troops at Aldershot and Salisbury, and the second at Stonehenge for work with the artillery. Small units will, if necessary, be provided in addition for co-operation with the Garrison Artillery School at Golden Hill, and the Anti-aircraft School when formed.

There remain the Service squadrons for co-operation with the Fleet. It is proposed eventually to provide at home three Aeroplane squadrons and two Seaplane squadrons. To secure economy and to give the units a corporate existence and ample facilities for practice it has been decided that aeroplanes will no longer be carried normally in capital ships as was done during the war, but will only be embarked when required to take part in Fleet exercises.
The Aeroplane squadrons will consist of one reconnaissance and spotting squadron, one squadron of fighter machines and one of torpedo-carrying machines. The two former will be based on the Firth of Forth where ample facilities exist for practice and for the embarkation and disembarkation of machines, a most important point. The torpedo-carrying squadron will be located at Gosport, the most suitable station for torpedo work, and it is proposed to provide a small experimental unit at the same station in order to develop fully this form of co-operation with the Navy, which is of primary importance. Of these three squadrons it is only proposed to provide one, the reconnaissance squadron, at full strength in the ensuing financial year. This is necessary in order to study and perfect the system of observation of artillery fire which from various causes was not so highly developed on the naval side as on the land side during the war. The torpedo squadron will be maintained at sufficient strength to carry on the essential research work while the fighting squadron will be formed in the first instance at a

strength of one flight only. In addition, the Admiralty proposed to keep two aircraft carriers in commission. One of these will be equipped with seaplanes for service abroad, while the other will remain at home and be used primarily for training and experimental purposes and ready if necessary to embark a flight of torpedo or other machines.

The provision of these two carriers is of the first importance since we must look forward to the time, as suitable machines develop, when fleets will so to speak take their aerodromes with them in the shape of a carrier, and the carriage of aircraft on capital ships with its attendant disadvantages and dangers will be a thing of the past.

Of the two seaplane squadrons, it is only proposed at present to form one flight only. The seaplane has obvious advantages over the aeroplane for long distance work over water, and a time may probably come when all work in co-operation with the Navy will be done by this class of machine. For this reason, if for no other, it is essential to have a few such units.

The lighter-than-air service is a difficult problem. The cost of providing such a service on a large scale in peace is prohibitive, and the use of airships in war may be said to be still in the experimental stage. It is proposed therefore to keep one airship station only, namely Howden, where sufficient accommodation exists for two rigid and a few smaller ships, and to retain as a commencement one rigid and two non-rigids only. This will allow research work and development to continue, and the use of airships in peace and war to be further studied.

4. *Reserves.* Although mobilization on a large scale is not taken into account, it is very necessary to provide a small reserve to meet any sudden call in the case of a small war anywhere in the Empire. For the next year or two there will, doubtless, be no difficulty in enrolling as many ex-officers and men as are likely to be required, and all that will be necessary will be to provide facilities for their training and practice flying.

It is intended, however, if possible, in addition to lay the foundation of a future Air Force on a territorial basis. No detailed scheme has yet been worked out, but it is probable that the eventual organization will provide for training both on a unit and on an individual basis. It is hoped that the manufacturing and commercial firms will assist by forming units of their employees. In addition there will doubtless be many individuals who will be glad to train themselves voluntarily with a certain amount of state assistance, and to undertake to serve, either overseas or at home, if called upon to do so. It is not intended to embark on the formation of any units during the next financial year, but it is proposed to commence with the training of individuals in the populous centres. This training will be carried out at the flying training wings whose functions will be described below.

5. *Extreme importance of training.* We now come to that on which the whole future of the Royal Air Force depends, namely, the training of its officers and men. The present need is not, under existing conditions, the creation of the full number of squadrons we may eventually

require to meet strategical needs, but it is first and foremost the making of a sound framework on which to build a service, which while giving us now the few essential service squadrons, adequately trained and equipped, will be capable of producing whatever time may show to be necessary in future.

Before explaining our proposals in detail it is necessary to lay down certain postulates.

Firstly, to make an Air Force worthy of the name, we must create an Air Force spirit, or rather foster this spirit which undoubtedly existed in a high degree during the war, by every means in our power. Suggestions have been made that we should rely on the older services to train our cadets and Staff officers. To do so would make the creation of an Air Force spirit an impossibility apart from the practical objection, among others, that the existing naval and military cadet and staff colleges are not provided with aerodromes or situated in localities in any way suited for flying training.

Secondly, we must use every endeavour to eliminate flying accidents, both during training and subsequently. This end can only be secured by ensuring that the training of our mechanics in the multiplicity of trades necessitated by a highly technical service, is as thorough as it can be made. The best way to do this is to enlist the bulk of our skilled ranks as boys and train them ourselves. This has the added advantage that it will undoubtedly foster the Air Force spirit on which so much depends.

Thirdly, it is not sufficient to make the Air Force officer a chauffeur and nothing more.

Technical experts are required for the development of the science of aeronautics, still in its infancy. Navigation, meteorology, photography and wireless are primary necessities if the Air Force is to be more than a means of conveyance, and the first two are requisite for safety, even on the chauffeur basis.

6. *Training of Officers.* It is now necessary to sketch very briefly the training proposed for both officers and men. Owing to the necessity of a large number of officers in the junior ranks, and to the comparative paucity of higher appointments, it is not possible to offer a career at all. Consequently some 50 per cent only of the officers have been granted permanent commissions, the remainder being obtained on short service commissions or by the seconding of officers from the Army and Navy. Great importance attaches to the last class since an interchange of officers is bound to make for closer and more intelligent co-operation between the services.

The channels of entry for permanently commissioned officers will be through the Cadet College, from the Universities and from the ranks. The cadet college will be the main channel. The course will last two years, during which the cadets will be given a thorough grounding in the theoretical and practical sides of their profession, and will in addition learn

to fly the approved training machine, at present the Avro. The college is to open at Cranwell in Lincolnshire early next year, an ideal place for the purpose, with a large and excellent aerodrome and perfect flying surroundings. It will be necessary to accommodate the college temporarily in huts erected during the war, but every endeavour has been made to render these as suitable as possible, and it is proposed to erect a permanent college in the near future. On leaving the college, cadets will be commissioned, and will undergo a short course in air pilotage and practical cross-country flying at Andover. This school will probably not be required before early 1921. As soon as the cadets have passed this course they will be posted to a service squadron, as it is most important that they should join a unit which they can regard as their home, as the sailor does his ship or the soldier his regiment, as early as possible. Subsequently they will undergo a course in gunnery, without which no flying officer can be regarded as a service pilot. The gunnery school will be established at Eastchurch, but as the bulk of our present pilots have war experience, will not be required in the next financial year. After 5 years' service, officers will be required to select the particular technical subject they will make their special study during their subsequent career, eg, navigation, engines, wireless. Short and long courses will be provided in these subjects in order to cater both for the officer who wishes to continue primarily as a flying officer with a working knowledge of one or more technical subjects, and for those who wish to become really expert in a particular branch. Technical knowledge will, *inter alia*, qualify an officer for selection for high command.

The career of officers commissioned from the Universities or from the ranks – except in the case of boy mechanics receiving commissions, whose case will be dealt with later – will be identical with that of those from the cadet college, except that they will be taught to fly at a flying training wing before joining their squadrons. Short service and seconded officers will be taught to fly at training wings and will attend a course of aerial gunnery and probably one of air pilotage. In view of their short service, it is not proposed, save in special cases, to send them through the advanced technical courses. These officers will be eligible for promotion during their service in exactly the same way as the permanent officers. The technical schools required at once are those dealing with navigation, wireless, photography and engineering. Aerial navigation is practically a new science. Any attempt has been made during the current year to work out the theoretical principles in practice at Andover, and considerable progress has been made, but it is obvious that the chief need of aerial navigation will arise when flying over the sea, where the map is of no service, and it is consequently proposed to reopen this school at Calshot in the spring of next year.

Schools of wireless and photography are now in existence at Flowerdown, near Winchester, and at Farnborough respectively, while it is proposed to commence an engineering course, at a suitable station, shortly after Christmas.

For the training of University candidates, short service and seconded officers and officers of the reserve or Territorial Force, it is estimated that seven training wings would eventually be required.

In view, however, of the fact that the short service list has been filled by officers who have already been trained as pilots during the war, it is only proposed to form two of these on a reduced basis during the next financial year to deal with the training of University candidates, a small number of reserve officers and of certain officers granted permanent commissions, with the proviso that they must learn to fly within 12 months. In view of the exceptional facilities for training in Egypt, it is proposed to locate, at least, one of the training wings, together with branch schools of gunnery and air pilotage in that country, but whether it will be convenient to do so next year cannot yet be definitely foreseen.

One other most important school in connection with the training of the officer is essential, and it will probably be necessary to start it on a small scale in 1920. This is a school for flying instructors. The first school of this kind was started during the war at Gosport, and it is hardly too much to say that it revolutionized the art of flying. The science of flight was carefully analysed and the analysis practically applied to the problem of tuition with remarkable results. It is essential in future that all instructors in training wings and all officers of or above the rank of flight commander in service squadrons should have passed through this course. A liberal amount of dual control with a qualified instructor is one of the chief safeguards against the faulty flying which is the cause of the majority of accidents.

Although it is not proposed to open it during the next financial year, an Air Force Staff College must be formed as soon as possible. It is intended to establish this at Halton in the house of the late Mr Alfred Rothschild, purchased by the Government at his death with the whole estate. The house and its surroundings are eminently suited for the purpose, and there is an aerodrome within a quarter of a mile.

7. *Training of men.* The most difficult problem of all in the formation of this force is the training of the men. Demobilization has removed most of our best mechanics, and the efficiency of the squadrons to be formed depends on the most thorough instruction of those who are to take their place. It has, therefore, been decided to enlist the bulk of those belonging to long apprenticeship trades as boys, who will undergo a course of three years' training before being passed into the ranks. With a preliminary training of the nature contemplated and the practice of their trade during their subsequent service, it is confidently anticipated that these mechanics on passing to civil life will have no difficulty in securing recognition as skilled tradesmen. This is an important consideration since any tendency for the Air Force to be regarded as a blind alley occupation, would be fatal. The training of all these boys will eventually be carried out at Halton Park, where ample and well equipped technical shops are already in existence. Pending the erection of permanent barracks to replace wooden war-time huts, use will also be made of Cranwell, in Lincolnshire. It has been necessary to speed up the training of some 5,000 boys enlisted during, and shortly after, the war, and the residue of these, some 3,000, will complete their training, at Halton. A scheme has been drawn out for the future enlistment of boys by means of a competitive examination, and local education authorities have been circularized with a view to their nominating suitable boys to sit for the examination.

By this means it is hoped to secure a really high standard. The first entry under this scheme will take place early in 1920, and the boys will commence their training at Cranwell and will be moved to Halton as soon as the permanent accommodation is ready.

The boys, on successfully passing their final examination, will be graded as leading aircraftsmen, and a certain number will be specially selected for a further course of training, at the end of which they will either be granted commissions, or promoted to corporal. Those granted commissions will join the cadet college.

It is intended to enlist the remainder of the mechanics, of whom more than half will belong to short apprenticeship trades as men, and these will undergo 12 months training at Cranwell as soon as the boys have moved to Halton. Pending the move, it is proposed to carry out the training of these men at Eastchurch, which, as has already been said, will not be required in its eventual capacity as a gunnery school for another 12 months at least.

Non-technical men will be given a short course of recruit training at the depot at Uxbridge.

8. *Higher organization at home.* As regards higher organization in the United Kingdom, all units working with the Navy have lately been formed into one command, known as the Coastal Area Royal Air Force. The two remaining commands, known as the Southern and Northern Areas, will, early in 1920, be amalgamated into one command to be known as the Inland Area. This cannot be done earlier owing to the very large amount of work entailed in closing up surplus stations, demobilizing surplus personnel and generally clearing up the after effects of the war.

9. *Depots.* Each of the two Areas in the United Kingdom will have its repair depot, at Henlow for the Inland Area, and at Donnibristle, near Rosyth, for the Coastal Area. During the next financial year it will be necessary to retain three of the existing stores depots, but it may prove possible at a later date to reduce the number to two, though this is by no means certain. It is hoped that eventually arrangements will be made for all Royal Air Force mechanical transport to be repaired at Slough, but in view of the arrears of work it will be necessary to retain for the present our own repair depot at Shrewsbury. Each overseas theatre will have a combined repair and store depot of a size suitable to the number of squadrons based upon it.

10. *Necessity for large capital outlay on accommodation.* From the above outline of our proposals it will be seen that every endeavour is being made to reduce expenditure on personnel during 1920-1921 to the minimum absolutely essential to create the framework of our future Air Force. This is necessary, if for no other reason, owing to the peculiar position in which the Royal Air Force is placed as regards permanent accommodation. Though some of the wartime buildings can be made to serve for a year or two in their present state, the Air Force does not possess one single permanent barracks, and a large capital outlay on the provision of new buildings and the adaptation of the most suitable of the temporary buildings

is inevitable during the first few years. This will be balanced to a certain extent during the next two years by the small requirements in technical equipments due to the large stock remaining over from the war. The principle followed has therefore been to excise rigid economy at the outset over personnel and technical equipment in order to free as large a part as possible of the total sum provided towards the provision of barracks. As time goes on, the building services will absorb less, while the cost of technical equipment, and, to a lesser extent, of personnel, will increase, until eventually the works vote will be little in excess of the cost of maintenance.

It must be recognized, however, that the total cost of building will be large. The boys' barracks at Halton, for instance, with the necessary accessory buildings and the cadet college will no doubt be a heavy item. These are undoubtedly the two most expensive services, but the accommodation for personnel at the majority of our stations will have to be rebuilt or adapted at considerable cost. The outlay must, however, be faced, and it is undoubtedly wise to undertake the bulk of the work in the first few years, while the expense of other services can be kept down.

11. *Research.* One matter of supreme importance has not yet been mentioned, namely, the provision to be made for research. The departments of Supply and Research are now being transferred from the Ministry of Munitions to the Air Ministry, and a portion of the experimental establishments are a charge on the Air Force votes. Steady and uninterrupted progress in research is vital to the efficiency of the Air Force, and to the development of aviation generally, and on it depends both the elimination of accidents and the retention of the leading position we have established at such heavy cost during the war. The existing establishments must therefore be retained during the ensuing financial year at a sufficient strength to ensure that urgent work shall continue. Some of the work which was urgent under war conditions can, however, now be postponed until progress with the building programme liberates more money for other purposes. The principal aeroplane research establishments are at Biggin Hill, Martlesham Heath, and Grain, while airships' research will be undertaken at Cardington and Howden.

12. *Civil aviation.* No allusion has been made to civil aviation in this paper, which has been confined to the Service aspect of the question.

H M TRENCHARD
*Chief of the Air Staff*

AIR MINISTRY
*25th November, 1919.*

## APPENDIX

| — | Existing or to be formed in 1920-21. | Increase during 1921-22 to. | Increase during 1922-23 to. |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. – United Kingdom | | | |
| Striking Force | 2 Squadrons | 4 Squadrons | No increase |
| Training Wings | 2 Wings each of 3 Squadrons | 5 Wings | 6 Wings |
| Co-operation with Army Divisions | 1 Squadron | 2 Squadrons | No increase |
| Co-operation with Fleet (Home Waters) | 1 Squadron Reconnaissance and Artillery machines | No increase | No increase |
| | 1 Flight Ships' fighters | 1 Squadron ships' fighters | No increase |
| | ½ Squadron Torpedo Machines | 1 Squadron Torpedo machines | No increase |
| | 1 Flight Flying Boats | 1 Squadron Flying Boats | 2 Squadrons Flying Boats |
| | 1 Flight Float Seaplanes | No increase | No increase |
| Communications Squadron | 1 Squadron | No increase | No increase |
| Experimental Stations | 4 Stations for Aeroplanes, Seaplanes, Torpedo Machines and Wireless respectively | 4 Stations as before and trial ground for bombs and machine guns in addition | No increase |
| Schools and Training Centres | Cadet College | As for 1920-21, and in addition | As for 1921-22, substituting Staff College for Administrative and Technical School for Officers, and in addition |
| | Navigation School | | |
| | Flying Instructors' School | | |
| | Administrative and Technical School for Officers | | |
| | Wireless and Electrical Training School | | |
| | School of Photography | | |
| | School of Co-operation with Navy | | |
| | School of Co-operation with Army | | |
| | Balloon Training | | |
| | Airship Training | | |
| | Boys' Training Centre | } | |
| | Technical Men's Training Centre | } No increase. | No increase |
| | RAF Depot and Non-Technical Men's Training Centre | } | |

continued on next page

## APPENDIX - (cont'd)

| — | Existing or to be formed in 1920-21. | Increase during 1921-22 to. | Increase during 1922-23 to. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Depots | 2 Aeroplane Repair Depots<br>1 MT Repair Depot<br>3 Stores Depots | As for 1920-21 except that the MT Repair Depot will drop out as soon as the repair work for RAF vehicles can be undertaken at Slough | As for 1921-22 |
| Airships | 1 Station | No increase | No increase |
| II. – Overseas | | | |
| India | 8 Squadrons<br>1 Depot | No increase | No increase |
| Egypt | 7 Squadrons<br>1 Depot | 7 Squadrons<br>1 Depot<br>1 Training Wing | 7 Squadrons<br>1 Depot<br>1 Training Wing<br>1 School of Air Pilotage<br>1 School of Gunnery |
| Mesopotamia | 3 Squadrons<br>1 Depot | No increase | No increase |
| Malta | 1 Flight Seaplanes | 1 Squadron Seaplanes | No increase |
| Alexandria | 1 Flight Seaplanes | 1 Squadron Seaplanes | No increase |
| Mediterranean | 1 Flight Float Seaplanes on carrier | No increase | No increase |

## APPENDIX B

# THE PART OF THE AIR FORCE OF THE FUTURE IMPERIAL DEFENCE

### Observations by Mr. Balfour on the Position of the Air Force in relation to the Army and Navy

The position of the Air Force in relation to the Army and Navy has been brought before the Standing Sub-Committee in Papers prepared by the staffs of all three Services. The conclusions presented in these Papers differ widely from each other, and such discussion as has taken place on the subject at the Committee makes it fairly clear that no agreement is likely to be arrived at by any further interchange of argument and counter-argument across the table. In these circumstances, the decision of the main point at issue must lie with the Cabinet, and I promised the Standing Committee that I would prepare a Paper for Cabinet use, dealing with the most important practical issue. It must be clearly understood that the following observations represent only my views, from which the experts representing the three Services will doubtless differ as much as they differ from each other.

These differences are doubtless great and probably irreconcilable, but it must not therefore be supposed that underlying them there is not a considerable measure of agreement. All would agree, I think, that where the part played by the Flying Force is an auxiliary part, either to the Army or the Fleet, it must be under the General or Admiral by whom the Army or Fleet is commanded. The Naval and Military General Staffs would never allow, and the Air Force, I think, would never claim, that when aerial warfare was only one of the subsidiary instruments for carrying out a general plan, it must be controlled by the chief responsible for the whole scheme.

But supposing the roles are reversed – supposing the main operations are carried out by the Air Force, while the Navy and the Army play a relatively unimportant part in the operations – what then? That such a condition of things is possible seems indeed, to be hardly contemplated in the Papers submitted to us by the Naval and Military Staffs. The Military Staff, for example, regards the Air Force as holding a position analogous to artillery: like artillery, it is highly technical, and therefore requires a special training: like artillery, it is important, because it can co-operate with infantry, cavalry and tanks. To the critics holding this view it is absurd to allow aeroplanes to play an independent part as it would be to confer a similar privilege on guns and howitzers. The General Staff, indeed, dwell with some insistence on the fact that in earlier times a different view was taken, and the artillery was not placed under Army control until the necessity for maintaining unity of command forced it into its proper position of subordination, and they appear to think that the same principle will, in the case of the Air Force, lead to the same result.

Parenthetically I may observe that the permanent tendencies have not always been towards unification. Up to the seventeenth century, for example, fleets were navigated by sailors,

while naval strategy and naval tactics were determined by soldiers. The complete differentiation between the organisation which carried on war by land and war by sea is a relatively late growth.

Leaving history on one side, may we not put out present question as follows: Are there, or are there not, military operations of first-class importance in which the main burden of responsibility is thrown upon the Air Force, while the other services play either an insignificant part or no part at all? The Air Force claim that there are; and it seems to me that their claim must be allowed.

Of these operations the most striking is home defence against air raids. The Air Force assert that if there is another great war, the first and the most formidable danger which this island will run will take the form of a great air attack directed by the enemy against London and other vital spots. From invasion by sea the Fleet may be able to protect us; only the Air Force can protect us from invasion by air. Even anti-aircraft guns, however, numerous and however well directed, will never prevent invading aeroplanes working their will upon a city like London. Aircraft must in such cases be met by aircraft.

Here, then we have a military operation which not only can be carried out independently by the Air Force, but which cannot be carried out by anything else. The Air Force does not act as an auxiliary; it requires no aid either from the Navy or the Army unless, indeed, the anti-aircraft guns were controlled by the latter, which would be contrary to the principle of a single command. In any case, since the air force would do most of the work, it is they who should be responsible for its direction.

But the very same argument which requires that the Air Force should be autonomous in operations which are in the main aerial, requires them to accept a position of strict subordination when they are acting merely as auxiliaries to fleets or armies.

Between these two extremes, however, are many gradations. If, for example, a punitive expedition, consisting of aeroplanes unaccompanied by troops, is sent against a tribe on the north-west frontier of India or in Mesopotamia, ought this to be controlled from Military Headquarters or from Air Headquarters? Or again, if a convoy of merchant ships has to be protected up the Channel, is this operation to be carried out under the orders of the Admiralty, or merely in close co-operation with the Admiralty? In other words, are the aeroplanes to have a purely dependent status like aeroplanes in the field, or are they to be regarded as an independent force collaborating with the Navy, as the Navy on occasion acts in cooperation with the Army? On the whole I incline to the latter view.

There is a tendency in some of the Papers laid before the Standing Committee to minimise the military effect on this country of air raids successfully carried out on a very great scale. In the memorandum prepared by the General Staff there is a picture drawn of Great Britain with

its capital in ruins and the Admiralty and the War Office carrying on their duties undismayed in the safe but obscure retreat supplied by some disused coal-mine. Even such a catastrophe as this, they say would not force a decision; and perhaps they are right. I would, however, observe that as a matter of history, peace has usually been arranged between belligerents long before the worsted party was reduced to so pitiable a condition, and while the position of the General Staffs of the Army and Navy heroically carrying on their functions at the bottom of a coal pit might in some respects be less disastrous than it seems, seeing that in the contingency supposed they would have very little to do, the enemy aeroplanes, wandering at will over the country, could carry out their work of destruction, however numerous and however heroic might be the Armies and the Navies of the country they were reducing to ruin.

> (Note. – I would parenthetically observe that were France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark neutral, no first-class Power could invade us by air, nor is it easy to imagine circumstances in which a great British army could operate on the Continent of Europe).

The conclusion that I draw from these considerations is that the Air Force must be Autonomous in matters of administration and education; that in the case of defence against air raids the Army and the Navy must play a secondary role; that in the case of military operations by land, or naval operations by sea, the situation must be reversed and the Air Force be in strict subordination to the General and Admiral in supreme command, while there are other cases, such as the protection of commerce or attack on enemy harbours or inland towns, in which the relation between the Air Force and the other Services must be regarded rather as a matter of co-operation, like that which prevails between the Army and the Navy, than of the strict subordination necessary when the aeroplanes are acting merely as auxiliaries. This threefold relation between the Air Force and the two other Services has no exact precedent, and would undoubtedly require tact and judgment on the part of all the Departments concerned. But it seems to me to be logical, and I am convinced that any attempt to reduce the new force to an inferior position will seriously hamper its vigorous development and may put us at a serious disadvantage compared with nations who, for whatever reason, have abandoned rivalry at sea and desire to exploit to the utmost the new weapon whose edge cannot be completely turned by any hostile superiority in fleets or armies.

(Initialled): A.J.B.

July 26, 1921.

This article was transcribed by RAF CAPS from an original held at the RAF Museum Archive, Hendon.

An electronic version is available at:

http://www.airpowerstudies.co.uk/apps/documents/

## Comment from Air Marshal Trenchard on Mr Balfour's Cabinet Paper[i]

I would like to say that there is one thing which has been thrashed out during the past six or eight months, and that is our taking over some of the responsibilities of the defence of this Empire from the Navy and Army.

This question has been discussed both orally and by papers representing all points of view, before Mr. Balfour, who delivered his judgement, which was embodied in Cabinet Paper 149C. This gave a pronouncement in favour of the many claims of the Air Service, although Mr. Balfour was, I may say, one of those who during the war, were not in favour of forming a separate Air Force.

[i] Royal Air Force Museum Hendon: Trenchard MFCs: 76/1/100

# ASPECTS OF SERVICE AVIATION*

BY AIR MARSHAL SIR H M TRENCHARD, BART, KCB, DSO

The innumerable details connected with a fighting Service cannot be dealt with in a short article, and I propose, therefore, to touch upon some of the aspects only. This opportunity will enable me to explain to a wider public than can be reached by official regulations and pronouncements some of the main principles which are guiding us in the raising, maintenance, distribution and employment of the Royal Air Force.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The test of every fighting Service is war. Its organization, training, distribution, systems of command and administration must always be primarily governed by this consideration. Peace has its own problems and difficulties, financial and other; but in solving them we must always keep war in the forefront of the picture and try to foresee its possibility, probability, locality and nature.

Under modern conditions, no nation can afford to keep its fighting forces, whether they be raised on a voluntary or compulsory basis, at such a strength in peace time as to be able to deal (without expansion) with war on any considerable scale. To a greater or less degree, all the fighting Services of today must be organized on the cadre principle and must have behind them the necessary reserves of trained men and material, with plans for speedy mobilization worked out in every detail.

These factors affect in varying degree the Navy, the Army and the Air Force. The last-named is perhaps faced with the hardest problem of all in that its reserves are most difficult to maintain while the most rapid mobilization is absolutely essential.

In the report of the American Aviation Commission, presented to Congress a year ago, a list of what the Commission described as "unescapable conclusions" is given, among which are included the following:

> "That any future war will inevitably open with great aerial activity in advance of contact either upon land or sea, and that victory cannot but incline to that belligerent, able first to achieve, and later to maintain, his supremacy in the air.
>
> "That no sudden creation of aerial equipment to meet a national emergency already at hand is possible. It has been proved within the experience of every nation engaged in the war that two years or more of high pressure effort has been needed to achieve the quantity production of aircraft, aircraft engines, and accessory equipment. The training of personnel, including engineering, production, inspection, maintenance, and operating forces – covering some fifty distinct trades and some seventy-five industries – has proved itself a stupendous task when undertaken upon the basis of war emergency alone".

* The substance of this article was contained in an address delivered by Sir H Trenchard at the Air Conference on the 14th of October, 1920.

That is the American view. I do not think any of us who have experience of aviation during the war will be inclined to quarrel with these conclusions.

It must always be remembered that mobilization does not end war, but only begins it, and that therefore additional provision must be made against war wastage. The difficulties of the Air Service are abnormal in this respect also. The nature of its work makes wastage high, both in personnel and material. The necessity for immediate and intensive training on a greatly increased scale adds to it.

It is obvious that the Royal Air Force, on any financial basis we are likely to be able to afford in peace time, cannot of itself create the reserve of personnel or maintain the stock of material requisite to meet these needs. Great reserves of material present a peculiarly difficult problem, since, in addition to being very costly to provide and store, a great deal of such material deteriorates rapidly, whilst all is liable to become obsolete owing to the rapid development of aeronautical science.

I must here emphasize the point that I am only dealing with the present and the next ten or fifteen years, as after that period development may become stabilized.

To quote the Report of the American Commission again, a third conclusion is reached:

> "That for economic reasons, no nation can hope in peace time to maintain air forces adequate to its defensive needs except through the creation of a great reserve in personnel, material, and producing industry, through the encouragement of Civil Aeronautics. Commercial Aviation and Transportation development must be made to carry the financial load".

One is forced to the conclusion that the Royal Air Force, for a first-class war, must be dependent on outside aid, and what outside aid is possible except Civil Aviation? In the same way as the Navy relies on the Mercantile Marine, but to a far greater extent must the Air Force rely on Civil Aviation. Remember, I say a first-class war.

Regarded in this light, the present situation cannot be described as altogether satisfactory, but we must remember that only two years have passed since the Armistice; and most of these two years have been occupied on the service side in getting rid of war wreckage, temporary personnel, surplus material, aerodromes, etc, and on the Civil side in exploring the possibilities of Civil and Commercial Aviation. Fortunately mobilization on a large scale is not, humanly speaking, a problem of the moment, and we may expect that the new form of transport will prove its value before long in Civil Aerial Transport. The train did not replace the stage coach, nor the motor bus the horse bus completely and suddenly; each had its early years of effort towards commercial efficiency, and there is no reason to be discouraged because the aeroplane seems like to follow the same course.

I will now turn to some of the more immediate problems of Service Aviation. Of these the most important are concerned with organization, the provision of officers and men and planning of their Service careers, the principles of distribution and employment of the Royal Air Force units, and the laying down of foundations for the future.

## ORGANIZATION

In helping to lay down the organization of the Royal Air Force in peace it was the endeavour of all concerned to maintain the principles that stood so well the strain of the war, and also to base its organization on the traditions that were built up during the war. Moreover, whilst always keeping in view future requirements and possible developments, we have had to watch present needs.

A fighting Service may be compared to a fruit tree consisting of roots and trunk, branches and fruit. The roots and trunk are the raw material in officers, men and equipment, the branches are the training and depot organization, and these two produce the fruit, namely the fighting unit.

The man who plants an orchard of young trees cannot expect much crop for the first few years. If he allows the trees to bear too much fruit in their early years, he only weakens them and destroys his chance of a good and valuable crop in years to come. We are exactly in the same position. As far as possible, our aims have been to ensure a well grown tree with strong and healthy roots, but demobilization left us with little but roots and the new growth is still in the sapling stage.

Unfortunately the Armistice did not usher in universal peace, and fighting has been going on in many theatres ever since. We have had, therefore, to a certain extent to force the crop, thereby inevitably retarding growth. To drop metaphor, demobilization left us with the bare number of officers and men required, but with neither the pre-war experience, organization or resources enjoyed by the older Services. For instance, we did not have a single permanent barrack on the scale of the up-to-date barracks of the older Services, nearly all our buildings being temporary war constructions. The trades of the men did not correspond to requirements after all those who were temporary men were demobilized. Again, those who were retained were in many cases only liable to a further short term of service, and the training of recruits to take their places had to be commenced at once, and there were few instructors. But for a long time the size and composition of the Air Force had necessarily to remain undecided, peace establishments could not be drawn up, and even the approximate number of men whom it was required to train in each trade was a matter of guess-work.

The Navy and Army, especially the latter, were no doubt faced with similar difficulties, but not to the same extent. They had their pre-war experience as a guide, and whereas in a battalion the shortage of a few men hardly affects the unit as a whole, in a highly technical Service like the Royal Air Force, the lack of one essential tradesman in a squadron may seriously affect efficiency.

I have only put forward these considerations in order to give some indication of the complexities of the problem. We want criticism and welcome it. The more I see of it the more I know it helps us. It is sometimes said that criticism should be informed and constructive, and not uninformed and destructive. All I can say is that I have often found uninformed and destructive criticism more helpful than informed and constructive criticism of which I hear and read so much.

The greatest trouble we have to deal with is impatience. Probably, all the most useful people are impatient; but I would appeal for a little patience with our Service for its own sake, and, as I said before, in order to make the root healthy in the future.

Otherwise our task only becomes harder, and the day is postponed on which the Service can be put on a really sound footing.

**PROVISION OF PERSONNEL**

The efficiency of a fighting Service depends primarily on its personnel, their moral and discipline, their keenness and professional knowledge, and last but not least, their well-being and contentment.

In considering this aspect of the problem, the fact that we are a new Service helps us in many ways. We can pick the brains of the older Services and profit by their wealth of experience, and we are also unhampered by tradition. It is, however, also a handicap, owing to the uncertainty as to the career offered to both officers and men. Many questions inevitably occur to those who are attracted by the Service: What is the prospect for the officer as regards his probable position and income in middle age? What will become of the disabled pilot? These questions, and many others have been very carefully considered, but it is not easy to get into touch with the individual and reassure him.

Official literature is unavoidably tinged with caution in the matter of promises, and is apt to have more of a repellent than an attractive effect. I therefore welcome this opportunity of filling in a few of the blanks. First, as regards officers: the nature of the Air Service is such that a large proportion of younger officers and comparatively few older ones are needed. Consequently, no Air Force can provide a career within itself for the whole of the young officers it requires, and some form of entry for comparatively short terms of service, to supplement the permanent officers, is a necessity.

This is equally true, whether the Air Force exists as a separate Service or in its former divided state. Indeed, this fact was recognized both by the War Office and the Admiralty when the special entry schemes were first drafted before the war. I am afraid that sometimes this has been overlooked. The number of officers given permanent commissions, therefore, has been, and will in future be, limited to the extent necessary to provide for all a reasonable prospect of rising to the higher ranks and earning a substantial pension. For those who may become permanently

unfit to fly by reason of accidents or from other causes the Air Force itself will always provide a certain number of ground billets which do not necessitate flying; and for any who cannot be so absorbed, we are seeking sanction for a liberal scale of disability pensions. In this connection, I think we may confidently anticipate a great reduction in the accident ratio, as I am practically certain that in the next generation there will be no strain in flying, other than that inseparable from Service strain. The strain of war flying was great and will always be so, but the strain of peace flying is, I think, due to the pre-conceived idea of the dangers of flying. War training was perforce hurried and intensive, so as to meet the constant call for reinforcements from all fronts, but in peace there is no need for this, and consequently training can be longer and more thorough. The development of more reliable machines possessing a greater range of speed, and capable of landing slowly in confined or awkward ground, will similarly lessen the risk for the trained pilot.

As regards other ranks, we hope to enlist the bulk of our requirements in the long apprenticeship trades as boys. Local education authorities and teachers' associations are extending us their help and support, and I hope, as the advantages and the needs of the Service become more widely known, that we shall have no difficulty in obtaining the numbers we require; on the contrary, that we may look forward to keen competition.

These boys are being given three years' thorough training, both theoretical and practical, in their trade, and on completing this will do seven years' colour service. Vacancies in the short apprenticeship trades will be filled by direct enlistment of men, both skilled and unskilled. The latter are undergoing the periods of training (on the average about twelve months) necessary to make them efficient in their particular trade. The men required for unskilled labour are similarly obtained by direct enlistment, and we hope it will be found possible to teach a trade to as many as wish to learn one during their service in the Royal Air Force. General education has not been forgotten. A scheme has been sanctioned for the engagement of civilian teachers on a salary basis which we hope will attract a good proportion of Public School and University men. At the Cadet College and the Boys' Training Establishments the scheme is already working, and, as our peace organization takes shape, we hope to extend it first to the Men's Training Establishments and eventually to all training units. I think I have said enough to show that steps are being taken to ensure that service in the Air Force on a long service basis is not a blind alley occupation.

The entry of those officers who can only be taken on a short basis may prove to be a more difficult problem. As yet the scheme is only in the experimental stage, since there was no lack of officers who would otherwise have been demobilized, who were willing and anxious to continue serving for another two or three years. The retention of these officers is necessarily a merely temporary expedient, only made possible as a direct result of the war. For the future we are, at present, looking to two sources. First, the seconding of officers from the Navy and Army; and second, the entry of officers direct from civil life on a definite short service engagement who will receive a gratuity and return to civil life on the expiration of their engagement, subject only to a liability to a certain period of service in the Reserve.

These two sources are interdependent, and each is an essential feature of the scheme. Since permanent officers will only be productive of an RAF Reserve to a very limited extent, and seconded officers will not be so at all, the short service officer must be the backbone of any Reserve designed to meet requirements which do not call for a national effort.

If a large number of officers come forward from the older Services for seconding to the RAF, the number of short service commissions offered will be correspondingly less, and so the best material only need be taken. By thus raising the standard of the candidates, the older Services will help to ensure that their air requirements are met by the best type of officers. The seconding system, moreover, whilst of paramount importance to the Air Force, is also a fundamental factor in the development of the Navy and the Army. Whatever the future may show that the Air Force is capable of doing in its independent capacity, it cannot be doubted that it will always be called upon to work in close and intimate co-operation with the Navy and Army. No commander who has once experienced the advantage of seeing "what is on the other side of the hill" is likely to forego it. But the other Services cannot make the best use of the Royal Air Force unless they know its possibilities and limitations and understand the principles of its employment. Officers of the Navy and Army should know about the limitations of machines, for instance, the small amount of actual flying that can be done, at any rate continuously, in each twenty-four hours, and the reasons for this, ie fatigue of pilots and the limitations of petrol capacity, due to the necessity of high performance. Naval and military commanders should understand these limitations and the consequent necessity for making the best use of aircraft during the time they can be in the air; they must study the influence of these things upon themselves and their tactics. In the case of the Army, some of the effects are plain. Movements will have to be carried out by night to a much greater extent than in the past, in camps and billets comfort will often have to be sacrificed to security from aerial observation. Camouflage and smoke will have to be extensively employed. There is no better way, in fact it might almost be said that there is no real way, of learning all this except by personal experience. The officers who are now seconded under this scheme will, I hope, be the naval and military commanders of the future. The Royal Air Force could, if necessary, be officered in other ways, but the seconding scheme is essential from the point of view of the other Services.

To return for a moment to the short service scheme, this is admittedly an experiment. Doubts have been expressed as to whether it will prove attractive, but I would like to put two questions. Rightly administered on broad-minded and sensible lines, is it not possible that four years' service in the Royal Air Force between the ages of 19 and 24 might prove, in many cases, a substitute for those who cannot afford a University career? Again, is the latter age really too old to permit a man entering upon another career, taking into consideration that he will have gained some experience of handling men, the widened outlook which results from travel and a modicum at least of technical knowledge?

## DISTRIBUTION

Distribution affects very considerably the organization of the Service, and I said just now that

our problem is to meet present needs while keeping in view future requirements. Present needs are difficult to estimate in view of the almost universal unrest which causes the storm centre to shift from day to day. This inevitably makes for dispersion, which means inefficiency. In every case of military force, the evil of small detachments is recognized, but the material assistance that can be provided by small aerial units, together with the moral support they can render, is apt to obscure the fact that in an Air Service the inefficiency of small detachments is out of all proportion to their decrease in size. This is, of course, because the Air Force, being a highly technical Service, is dependent on adequate workshop facilities, good provision of spare parts and other technical supplies, as well as efficient supervision by the higher ranks. Air Commodore Brooke-Popham said in France, "An infantryman can still fight if he is deficient of his greatcoat or his water-bottle, but the loss of one nut or bolt can render an aeroplane useless and an encumbrance on the ground". The idea, therefore, is to concentrate in as few centres as possible, with power to move a suitable force quickly to any point required. The latter condition is the most difficult one to fulfil under present conditions. Movement by air is complicated for us by the fact that to get anywhere from the United Kingdom we must pass over one or more European countries where we cannot establish the necessary ground organization, while the route between Egypt and India cannot be used at present owing to Arab unrest.

Movement by sea is a slow business, unless aeroplane carriers are available, which is not the case at present. Shipping is difficult to obtain, and this is not to be wondered at when the bulk and weight of a squadron and its stores are remembered. A DH9A Squadron, for instance, required 383 cases of various sizes, the twelve largest being over 27 feet long, weighing 2¼ tons each, measuring 37½ shipping tons and requiring specially large hatches.

In spite of many difficulties, we have attempted to adhere to the principle of concentration, at present, I fear, not too effectually, but it is a principle which must be looked upon as fixed and must be striven for. One cannot look at a map of the world without seeing that Egypt is the centre of it from a Service aviation point of view. It also affords an ideal flying climate.

## EMPLOYMENT

When we come to consider the employment of the Royal Air Force, the first want we feel is that there is but little literature on the subject. There is no Royal Air Force Clausewitz or Hamley or Mahan, and we cannot learn entirely from naval and military history. I wish here to emphasize that, although there is no Clausewitz or Hamley or Mahan for the Royal Air Force, it must not be thought that there are no principles of tactics or strategy for the air. The principles are there. Principles are not opinions but facts, and are unchangeable through all the changing types of machines of war. But what is the trouble? It is that these principles have not been formulated by a Hamley or Mahan, and that they have not been accepted by the outside world. But the principles found in the last years of the war were found in the same way as they were found in the past. They were not created; facts made them, and they exist and are sound, if only we had a Hamley or a Mahan to express them to the outside world.

But at the same time the coming of the Air Service means that the application of the old principles of warfare must be carefully studied to see in what way the application of the principles should be modified. Only think what an effect the introduction of the submarine, making use of the third dimension to a very limited extent, has had on naval warfare. Time and space problems in aviation differ entirely from those which confront the naval or military commander. The moral factor is enormously enhanced in comparison with the material. There are no physical obstacles.

We have, however, the experience of war in many theatres to guide us, although it has not yet been committed to paper in any readily accessible form. The need of a Royal Air Force Staff College to analyse principles and create a school of thought is obvious. This could not be done at the Navy or Army Colleges, where, with all the goodwill in the world, the problem would inevitably be approached with pre-conceived ideas. In this connection I would like to emphasize once more the point I tried to make when discussing the provision of officers, namely, that the other Services must study and understand us, since, whatever the future developments of the Royal Air Force in its independent capacity, it is certain to be constantly employed in co-operation with both the Navy and Army, and can only be used to the best advantage if studied and understood.

In my opinion the most important principle of all, and the one perhaps least generally understood and appreciated, is that the work of the Air Service either on land or sea, in spite of its many and various aspects, can only achieve its greatest efficiency if regarded and carried out as a single co-ordinated effort. The work required, whether by the Navy or Army, is both tactical and strategical. It consists of reconnaissance and photography, of spotting for the artillery, and of offensive action against troops or ships, against personnel and material on lines of communication, depots and harbours. Independently of this work in intimate co-operation with the other Services the Air Force can attack the enemy's sources of supply and the moral of his civil population and government. It is, however, utterly wrong and very wasteful to look upon these as entirely separate duties. In the first place, to perform any of them with success it is necessary to gain predominance in the air, and the air is one element. With regard to this predominance in the air, I would like to point out that in a first-class war one side will gain predominance in one place and may temporarily lose it in another theatre; and we must face the fact that the main point is to have the predominance in that area which at the time is considered of primary importance, if it is not possible to gain it in all areas. Another fact which must be borne in mind is that the development of an aeroplane with greatly increased fighting capabilities may cause a temporary loss of the predominance in the air, and, until the civil population and the army consider that they have lost the war, it is never safe to consider that one side has gained predominance permanently. To revert to the co-operation of what is essentially air work with that for the other Services, it may be that the normal duty of some squadrons may be artillery work, of others the attack of the enemy's fighting troops, and of others the distant bombing of his factories, but it is essentially wasteful to divide the Air Force up into separate bodies for each duty. If, for instance, squadrons are only employed for long-

distance bombing, starting possibly from somewhere outside the army zone, their power is wasted when the weather is unsuitable, as it often must be. Tactically, too, the long-distance operations for reconnaissance and bombing are intimately connected with the closer work in immediate co-operation with the fighting troops. A short-distance bomb raid carried out by machines which can be temporarily spared from artillery work will inevitably bring the enemy's fighting machines into the air, and the long-distance raid or reconnaissance can be timed to start when the enemy's machines will be on the point of exhausting their petrol supply. Or, again, raids on the enemy's aerodromes can be carried out by fighting machines of comparatively short endurance just prior to the commencement of long-distance work. All bombing, even when carried out on very distant and apparently independent objectives, must be co-ordinated with the efforts that are being made by the land and sea forces, both as to the selection of objectives and as to the time at which the attacks shall take place. In my opinion, bombing, to be effective must be continuous, and it is from the accumulative moral effect of attacks carried out day after day for a week or ten days in succession that the best results may be expected. I may be wrong, but, in my opinion, the moral effect of bombing, especially night bombing, does not decrease with experience. I have often heard people say that, although the moral effect of bombing may be very great for the first two or three times, people soon get used to it. Personally, I believe the reverse is the case.

I have not mentioned surprise, which is just as important in the air as on the ground, though harder to obtain. For one thing, the need for exerting constant pressure conflicts with surprise, but, at the same time, surprise can be used with great effect in the air owing to the power of being able to switch off from one point of attack on to another, very often with hardly any movement of aerodromes; but in this connection I must emphasize the point that I am certain was proved, but was, I agree, contested by some, namely, that aerodromes must and will be pushed close up to the enemy to get the maximum out of air power for most of its work. I agree that long-range bombing can be carried out from farther back, but I must emphasize the fact that, in carrying it out from bases situated unnecessarily far away from the enemy's front, some of the power of the air will be lost.

There are, also, some negative principles, especially applicable to fighting on a smaller scale in undeveloped and extensive countries, which appears the most probable form of warfare we are likely to see for the next few years.

The power of aircraft to cover great distances at high speed, their instant readiness for action, their independence of physical communications, their indifference to obstacles and the inability of enemy unprovided with an Air Service to counter their attack combine to encourage their use more often than the occasion warrants. The power to go to war at will is apt in fact to result in a thoughtless application of that power. This is particularly so in the case of small detachments at the disposal of relatively junior commanders. Over-precipitate action is not in itself perhaps a serious mistake, it is in its probable lack of results that the danger lies, by robbing the Air Service of that moral effect which is its chief asset. Offensive action in the

air to bring a stubborn enemy to task must be followed up, and this cannot be done if it is commenced with insufficient forethought and inadequate resources. The capacity of the Air Service to deal a swift and unexpected blow may indeed succeed in stifling an outbreak in its early stages, but it is in the power to continue offensive action day by day, and, if necessary, week by week, that the assurance of ultimate success lies.

This article was transcribed by RAF CAPS from Air Marshal Sir Hugh Montague Trenchard, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', *The Army Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1921), pp. 10-21. (Crown Copyright).

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# MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

*HC Deb 16 March 1922 vol 151 cc2469-528*
*Mr. CHAMBERLAIN*

If the matters raised by my hon. and gallant Friends related solely to the Navy, I should not have thought it necessary to intervene. It would be left to the very competent hands of the Admiralty representatives in this House. But as my hon. and gallant Friend and my Noble Friend have raised a question which cannot be confined to a single Service, which even as they have raised it affects two Services, as also two Ministers at present, and in all its implications affects all the three fighting Services and the fighting Ministries, it seems proper that the statement of Government policy should be made by a Minister, not the head of one of these various Departments, but on behalf of the Government as a whole. It is certainly due to no lack of respect to other Gentlemen who intend to speak, but I think it is for the convenience of the House that I should take the earliest opportunity of stating what are our views.

I do not pretend tonight to lay down a policy for all time. The Air man has had, during and since the War, an extraordinarily rapid development, but he would be a bold man who would attempt as yet to define the ultimate potentialities of the Air Force, or the place which it will hold in warfare, whether over the sea or over the land. I can imagine, without an undue strain upon my imagination, developments which may change the whole course of war, and which may quite conceivably lead the world in a short time to think that limitation of battleships or limitation of armaments is of very little use unless the new weapon is subjected to limitation of a similar kind. Accordingly in what I say I am declaring the policy of His Majesty's Government as things stand, and it is essential that that policy should be known, because it is not fair to any Service, nor can the best be expected from any Service, unless they know clearly what is our present policy.

I think my hon. and gallant Friends who have moved and seconded the Amendment have said everything that could be said in support of their Amendment from the particular point of view from which they approach the question. It was essentially and admittedly a rather narrow point of view. They were considering the interests of the Naval Service, even to such an extent that my hon. and gallant Friend at one point in his speech made the point that it was not fair to take enterprising officers, or officers of ability, from the Naval Service for the service of the country in another sphere. I must remind my hon. and gallant Friend of what indeed he will readily admit—that we have a common country, and that all these Services exist and only exist for the defence of that common country. We must look at it, therefore, from a wider point of view than that taken by my hon. and gallant Friend. I think it will be not without service to the House in coming to a judgment on the subject if I give a review of what has been the history of this arm up to the present. Some knowledge of the experiments we have already tried will not only be serviceable, but will be necessary to the formation of a correct judgment as to what is best to be done at present.

In 1912 a scheme for the creation of a Royal Flying Corps was laid before Parliament. The theory on which that scheme was based was that the needs of the Navy and Army differed, and that each required a technically developed arm respectively for sea and land warfare, but that the foundation of the requirements of each Service was identical, namely, an adequate number of efficient flying men. The aeronautical service, therefore, was to be regarded as one, and was designated at that time the Royal Flying Corps. It consisted of a naval and a military wing, maintained at the expense and administered by the Admiralty and the War Office respectively. There was established further a single Royal Aircraft Factory, common to both Services, and a central Flying School, all graduating at this school to remain to specialise in naval and military flying. And, in order to secure co-ordination between the two branches of the Royal Flying Corps, an Air Committee was set up as a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. My right hon. and gallant Friend (Major-General Seely) was the first Chairman of that Committee. But even from the first there was a tendency for the two Services to drift apart, and in 1914, before the outbreak of the War, the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps had already changed its title to the Royal Naval Air Service. With the outbreak of hostilities, the separation of the two Services was virtually complete. That is the first stage in the history of this arm. When war broke out, the War Office were responsible for the aerial defence of the country. But all the squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps were engaged in France, and at Lord Kitchener's request the Admiralty took responsibility for home defence against aircraft, early in September, 1914. Therefore, for the first two-and-a-half years of the war expansion of the two branches of the Air Service was developed independently, both as to organisation and supply, by the naval and military authorities. What was the result?

My hon. and gallant Friend proudly boasts that the Navy got all the best machines and all the best officers. How did it get them? Was that distribution dictated by the country's needs at the moment, or by any consideration of the country's need? It was dictated by a fierce inter-departmental competition in the market, the resources of which at that time were wholly insufficient to supply the Services. It was a haphazard and, therefore, a dangerous arrangement. It was an accidental, and, therefore, could not be a considered, arrangement. It resulted in overlapping, waste of effort, one Department bidding against another in the distribution and application of the resources of the country, not according to a considered view of the country's needs, but according to the relative skill and relative quickness of the different Departments in getting hold of what resources were available. Those are the great and glorious days the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Sir It. Hall) holds up to us as providing that which his Amendment would provide, and which the present system does not.

Towards the end of 1915, so patent were the facts that there arose a strong movement for co-ordination, though it was not at the time proposed to combine the two Services, because it was clear that for a considerable time to come the great bulk of the work in the air would be of a definitely naval or military character. There was already a strong body of opinion in favour of an Air Minister, who should have entire control of the Services, and a status equal to that of the First Lord of the Admiralty or the Secretary of State for War.

The next step in co-ordination was that in February, 1916, a Joint War Air Committee was appointed to collaborate in and co-ordinate questions of supply and design of material for the Naval and Military Air Services. That was not without some relation to the state of things on which my hon. and gallant Friend (Sir E. Hall) so lovingly dwelt. The Committee failed to present an agreed Report, and it was brought to an abrupt end by the resignation of its chairman (Lord Derby). That committee was succeeded by an Air Board, constituted on 11th May, 1916, under the Presidency of Lord Curzon. This Board was free to discuss matters of general policy in relation to the Air, including combined operations of the Naval and Military Air Services, and to make recommendations to the Admiralty and the War Office thereon, as well as to discuss and make recommendations on the types of machine required for the two Air Services. If either Department declined to act upon its recommendations, the President had the right of reference to the War Committee. The Board was also charged with the task of organising and co-ordinating —observe how often the word co-ordinating comes in; I emphasise it because it means that the system was not working smoothly, that there was not one policy, but two policies, often clashing and constantly overlapping—the supply of material and to prevent competition between the two Departments. Finally, it was responsible for the co-ordination of research in aerial matters between all the bodies concerned.

After further experience—in November of that year, 1916—the Government, after prolonged inquiry, decided on further developments, providing for the Admiralty and War Office to concert their respective aerial policies in consultation with the Air Board, and to submit their programmes of aerial production to the Air Board, which was to decide as to the extent to which the Departmental programmes were to be approved, having regard to the rate of production, the needs of other Departments and the respective urgency of the demands. Every one of these steps was necessary because the profound lack of co-ordination and of a central control had landed the country in difficulties, and had failed to provide us with a satisfactory defence. A change of Government took place in December of that year, but the new Government confirmed the decision of its predecessor; and the new Air Board was actually constituted on 6th February, 1917. Up to the middle of 1917 all the aerial output was absorbed by the older Services. The supply could not overtake the demand. The constantly growing series of activities to which aircraft was successfully applied outstripped the progress of manufacture, and forced us to apply all the machinery available for a purely naval or purely military purpose, and the building up of a reserve for an independent aerial campaign against Germany was impossible. By July, 1917, however, the Ministry of Munitions had the supply position well in hand. A deadlock appeared to have been reached both in the naval and military theatres, and it seemed conceivable that a sustained air offensive might contribute more powerfully than any other factor towards undermining the moral of the enemy, and disposing him towards a reasonable peace.

It was perfectly clear, however, that unless there were a properly constituted Air General Staff, under an Air Board or under an Air Ministry, aviation, output, however large, would continue to be absorbed by the two Services already existing. Accordingly, in August, 1917, the

Government decided in favour of the principle of uniting the Air Services, and of providing a special branch for the systematic raiding of German munition centres. And an Air Organisation Committee was appointed, under the Chairmanship of General Smuts, to work out the details for an Air Ministry, an Air Council, and a combined Air Force. The Air Council was set up by Order in Council on the 21st December, 1917.

The independent Air Force was constituted on 8th June, 1918, under the then General, now Air Marshal, Sir Hugh Trenchard, who was placed directly under the Air Ministry, although for purely operation purposes General Trenchard was under the supreme command of Marshal Foch. It was during this latter period, subsequent to the formation of the Air Ministry, that our Air Services achieved their maximum successes in the War. Although in 1918 a serious shortage in the supply of high-powered engines curtailed that programme, the limited amount of raiding which took place had a considerable effect on the enemy. It is well known that if the War had lasted a little longer, the range of our bombing squadrons would have greatly increased, and would probably have included Berlin. From that time to this the Air Force has remained a separate force under the Air Ministry.

I hope the House does not think that I have taken too long with the summary, which I could not well have made shorter if I were to give the House all the events that led up to the formation of the Air Ministry and of a separate Air Board by an Act of Parliament on the decision of this House. It will be seen that it was war experience which led to the creation of the Air Ministry, and to the constitution of a separate homogeneous Air Force. It was not theory derived from speculation in the past, but it was practical experience, after trying a great many other experiments, and the deficiencies which they left, that proved to the Government in the pressure of the War, and for the successful conduct of the War, the necessity of creating the system now in force.

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# REPORT

OF THE

## SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE

ON

# NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL DEFENCE

*Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.*

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# SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO ENQUIRE INTO THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL DEFENCE

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*Terms of Reference.*

The Prime Minister desires that a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, composed as follows:

The Marquess of Salisbury *(in the Chair)*,
The Chancellor of the Exchequer,
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
The Secretary of State for the Colonies,
The Secretary of State for War,
The Secretary of State for India,
The First Lord of the Admiralty,
Lord Balfour,
Lord Weir,
Sir Maurice Hankey *(Secretary)*

should meet to enquire into the co-operation and correlation between the Navy, Army and Air Force from the point of view of National and Imperial Defence generally, including the question of establishing some co-ordinating authority, whether by a Ministry of Defence, or otherwise, and, in particular, to deal with:

(a) The relations of the Navy and Air Force, as regards the control of Fleet air work.

(b) The corresponding relation between the Army and Air Force.

(c) The standard to be aimed at for defining the strength of the Air Force for purposes of Home and Imperial Defence.

(Initialled) A.B.L.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, SW1.
*March 9, 1923.*

## PART I – INTRODUCTORY

1. An examination of the Terms of Reference to the Sub-Committee, which are given on the preceding page, reveals that the enquiry covers the following separate but closely connected groups of questions:

(1) The co-operation and correlation between the three Services from the point of view of National and Imperial Defence (see Part II).

(2) Their co-ordination, whether by means of a Ministry of Defence or otherwise (see Part III).

(3) The relations of the Navy and Air Force as regards the control of Fleet air work (see Part IV).

(4) The corresponding relations of the Army and Air Force (see Part V).

(5) The standard to be aimed at for defining the strength of the Air Force for purposes of Home and Imperial Defence (see Part VI).

The whole of the above questions were dealt with, though not in the same order, by the Sub-Committee itself, which is hereafter referred to as the Committee or the Main Committee, with the one exception of item (3), which was remitted to a special Sub-Committee composed of:

Lord Balfour,
Lord Peel, and
Lord Weir.

2. Between the 15th March and the 31st October, the Main Committee has held 19 meetings, in addition to the 12 meetings of the special Sub-Committee, making a grand total of 31 meetings. The evidence of the Chiefs of Staff of the Fighting Services has been heard at great length on all the subjects discussed. The special Sub-Committee heard 16 witnesses. No less than 67 Memoranda were furnished to the Main Committee and 19 to the Sub-Committee, a total of 86 Memoranda. These include Memoranda on the question of a Ministry of Defence by the following authorities outside the Government service (see Part III):

Lord Midleton,
Lord Haldane,
Major-General Seely,
Sir Eric Geddes,
Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson,
Lieut-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston,

Major-General Sir J H Davidson,
Major-General Sir Frederick Sykes.

In addition, the Committee derived useful information from a report called for by their special Sub-Committee from Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Harington, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Allied Forces in Occupation in Turkey.

On the 18th June, the Chairman, accompanied by the Secretary of State for India and Lord Weir, received a deputation from the Parliamentary Air Committee. The deputation attended primarily with the object of presenting views on the question of the relations of the Navy and Air Force, but touched on many of the related questions which were before the Committee.

## PART II – CO-OPERATION AND CORRELATION BETWEEN THE THREE SERVICES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL DEFENCE

3. At the outset of the enquiry the Committee agreed that the term "National and Imperial Defence" could properly be defined as "Defence of Territory and Defence of Communications". In order to establish the principles of co-operation and correlation between the three Services from the point of view of National and Imperial Defence, it was found necessary to make a careful examination of the responsibilities of the three Services in this matter.

### PRE-WAR RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIGHTING SERVICES

4. The main responsibilities of the Navy, as they were regarded before the war, were set forth in a Memorandum by the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Principles of Imperial Defence in 1910 in the following terms:

> "The maintenance of sea supremacy has been assumed as the basis of the system of Imperial Defence against attack from over the sea. This is the determining factor in shaping the whole defensive policy of the Empire, and is fully recognised by the Admiralty, who have accepted the responsibility of protecting all British territory abroad against organised invasion from the sea".

5. The Army was responsible for dealing not with organised invasion from the sea, which was a purely naval responsibility, but with such raiding forces as might elude the Fleet. This responsibility included the general military defence of the United Kingdom, as well as the provision of fixed defences and garrisons at Naval bases, Imperial coaling stations and defended ports at home and abroad (other than those in the Dominions and India). The Army was also responsible for the provision of reinforcements for India in certain eventualities, for the defence of certain land frontiers, and for the maintenance of an expeditionary force to meet the military needs of the Empire, wherever they might arise. This expeditionary force formed the nucleus on which were built up the huge armies employed in the Great War.

6. The Royal Air Force before the war was regarded as purely ancillary to the older Services, of which it formed a part. It emerged from the Great War as a separate Service under a separate Ministry. It is essential, therefore, to the co-ordination of Imperial Defence that the responsibilities of the new Service should be very clearly defined and correlated with those of the sister Services.

**THE POST-WAR RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIGHTING SERVICES**

7. Considerable progress had been made before the commencement of the present enquiry in the direction of defining the post-war responsibilities of the three fighting Services. The enquiry by Mr Bonar Law's Sub-Committee on the Capital Ship (March, 1921), which heard much evidence as to the potentialities of the air arm at sea, had resulted in the retention of the capital ship as the basis of our sea power. The scope of the enquiry, however, did not extend to a definition of the respective responsibilities of the Navy and Air Force in regard to operations at sea.

8. The Committee of Imperial Defence had also approved an arrangement made between the War Office and Air Ministry in regard to the responsibility for anti-aircraft defence, under which the Air Force was to be responsible for the control of anti-aircraft defences, the War Office providing the necessary personnel and materiél on the ground.

9. Since the war, the Royal Air Force has been given the responsibility for the security of the mandated territory of Iraq and Palestine.

10. In addition, on the 16th March, 1922, the following principles in regard to the co-operation of the three Services were announced in the House of Commons:

> "(i) That the Air Force must be autonomous in matters of administration and education;
>
> "(ii) That in case of defence against air raids, the Army and Navy must play a secondary role;
>
> "(iii) That in the case of military operations by land or naval operations by sea, the Air Force should be in strict subordination to the General or Admiral in supreme command; and lastly,
>
> "(iv) That in other cases (such as the protection of commerce, and attack on enemy harbours and inland towns) the relations between the Air Force and the other Services should be regarded rather as a matter of co-operation than that of the strict subordination which is necessary when aeroplanes are acting merely as auxiliaries to the other arms". (Parliamentary Debates, March 16, 1922).

11. In order to ascertain whether the above allocation of responsibilities between the three Services required further readjustment, the Committee felt it necessary to make investigations into the strategical basis of our system of National and Imperial Defence.

12. The most important result of this part of the enquiry was to confirm the vital need for a great increase in our air forces, which had been established in previous enquiries. It soon became clear, not only that the Air Force has an important part to play in the defence of our home territory against sea-borne attack as well as of maritime communications in waters adjacent to the British Islands, but that to provide protection against aerial attack a large aerial home Defence Force was required. The question of the size of this force formed the subject of an interim report to the Cabinet, and is dealt with in Part VI of this Report. The adoption by the Government of the Committee's recommendations on this subject added to the responsibilities of the Royal Air Force. In other respects, however, it did not bear upon the problem of co-operation and correlation between the three Services, which depends on those aspects of National and Imperial Defence where strategical or tactical co-operation between two or more Services is required. The Committee therefore enquired into these questions in considerable detail.

13. So far as the protection of territory and communications in the wider oceans is concerned, the question of a readjustment of responsibilities between the Service Departments did not arise. Although certain types of aeroplanes have a radius of action up to 500-600 miles, and others up to 300-400 miles, neither the British nor any other Air Service is yet equipped with aeroplanes whose normal effective radius of action exceeds about 200 miles, and beyond that distance only sea-borne aircraft have for the present to be considered. But it must be remembered that the types of aeroplanes now in service use continue steadily to be replaced by machines of greater power and wider radius of action. Whatever the arrangements for the organisation and administration of the sea-borne air arm may be – a subject dealt with in Part IV – there is no dispute that its operations must be controlled and directed by the same authority that controls and directs the other operations of the Fleet, namely, the Admiralty. The responsibility of the Admiralty, therefore, for the protection of territory and communications in great oceans was not challenged.

14. In the narrow seas, however, Imperial territory and communications are evidently liable to attack, not only by surface craft and submarines, but also by aircraft, in so far as they are within the radius of action of aircraft operating from foreign territory. The Committee therefore found it necessary to enquire how far the power of the Navy to protect territory and communications in the narrow seas is affected by modern developments of naval and aerial warfare.

15. So far as territory is concerned, it is satisfactory to be able to record that the three General Staffs are agreed that in existing conditions the liability of the United Kingdom to sea-borne invasion as compared with the years preceding the war is negligible.

16. Another matter on which some measure of agreement was found to exist between the Naval Staff and the Air Staff is in regard to the increased risks to communications in those portions of the narrow seas which are exposed to attack by aircraft operating from shore bases, such as the English Channel and the Mediterranean. Both Staffs admit that the advent of

aircraft has increased the danger to communications in such waters, though they differ as to the extent of this danger.

17. Apart from this, when the Committee came to examine the question of the protection of maritime communications in the narrow seas, they did not find the same measure of agreement between the Staffs which they had met with in regard to the protection of the territory of the Mother country. On the contrary, this part of the enquiry revealed wide differences of professional opinion between the Naval Staff and the Air Staff, both in matters of principle and detail, on such questions as the power of a fleet to operate within effective striking range of hostile aircraft, the effectiveness of attacks on a fleet by aircraft and the power of a fleet to defend itself against such attacks, the defence of naval bases against aircraft attack and the protection of certain portions of our trade routes. The more closely the enquiry was pressed in matters of detail the wider these differences appeared.

In the course of this enquiry frequent appeals were made to the experience of the war in support of both sides of the various controversies, and the Committee obtained independent historical evidence from the Historical Section. The conditions of the late war, however, are not necessarily applicable to future wars, particularly in view of the potentialities of development in aircraft.

In the light of present knowledge the Committee did not feel competent to form an opinion on the difficult technical questions on which the General Staffs take different views. They felt that, apart from the provision of an adequate Air Defence Force, which is dealt with in Part VI of this Report, the most useful service they could render at the moment was to devise machinery for securing the smooth co-operation of the three Services, notwithstanding the differences of professional opinion, and for gradually building up a doctrine common to the three Services. This part of the terms of reference is dealt with in Part III of this Report. While the Committee do not put forward any suggestion to change the existing division of responsibility between the three Services as described in paragraph 10, they recommend that the responsibilities of the Navy and the Air Force in regard to the protection of communications in the narrow seas should form the subject of further investigation. They also consider that experiment in respect of the problems of air attack and defence at sea should be given due weight in Admiralty and Air Ministry programmes, in order to secure on the basis of practical experience the fullest measure of unity of professional opinion.

18. Before leaving the question of the co-operation and correlation between the three Services, the Committee desire to draw attention to the views of Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Harington on the subject, which were formed as the result of his experience in command of the Allied Forces of Occupation at Constantinople. These views illustrate and confirm the soundness of the principles approved by the Cabinet in March, 1922 (paragraph 10). General Harington suggests "that the principle should be laid down that the 'predominant partner' co-ordinates and the other Services should conform in exactly the same loyal way in

which Admirals de Robeck and Brock – both officers senior to me – have helped me". While the Committee are not prepared to recommend without further technical examination that this principle should be adopted in the settlement of all military problems in which more than one Service is concerned, they consider that it is worthy of the most serious consideration and should be examined by the new Committee of Chiefs of Staff referred to later in this Report (paragraph 36).

### CONCLUSIONS

19. The conclusions of the Committee in regard to this part of the Report may be summed up as follows:

(a) While the Committee do not put forward any suggestion to change the existing division of responsibility between the three Services as described in paragraph 10, they recommend that the responsibilities of the Navy and the Air Force in regard to the protection of communications in the narrow seas should form the subject of further investigation. The Committee further recommend that experiment in respect of the problems of air attack and defence at sea should be given due weight in Admiralty and Air Ministry programmes, in order to secure on the basis of practical experience the fullest measure of unity of professional opinion.

(b) The principal need, as regards co-operation and correlation, is close co-ordination, which is dealt with in Part III of this Report.

(c) The principle that in all belligerent operations in which more than one Service is concerned one of the three Services should be selected as a "predominant partner" to co-ordinate the other Services should be examined by the Committee of Chiefs of Staff.

(d) While the menace of attack from the air has greatly increased and necessitates a strong Home Defence Air Force as proposed in Part VI of this Report, the three Staffs are agreed that in existing conditions the liability of the country to sea-borne invasion has considerably diminished as compared with pre-war standards.

## PART III – CO-ORDINATION

### A MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

20. Since the war the most widely-discussed proposal for overcoming our defects in co-ordination is a Ministry of Defence, which has been put forward repeatedly both in Parliament and in the Press. In 1922 Sir Eric Geddes' Committee on National Expenditure recommended "the creation of a Co-ordinating Authority or a Ministry of Defence responsible for seeing that each force plays its part and is allotted appropriate responsibility for carrying out various functions". A Cabinet Committee, which reviewed the Geddes Report, endorsed the above recommendation, but, while admitting the creation of a Ministry of Defence may be the

ultimate solution of the problem, did "not consider that the present time is appropriate for the fusion of the administration of the three Services under one Minister". They recommended instead "that the Committee of Imperial Defence should be in constant session all the year round in order to consider and advise on matter of policy affecting the three fighting Services". On the 21st March, 1922, the late Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr Churchill), during a debate in the House of Commons, made an important speech in favour of a Ministry of Defence as the ultimate solution of our problems of co-ordination, though he admitted that the time for accomplishing this had not arrived. The gist is contained in the final passages:

"No solution of a harmonious or symmetrical character will be achieved in the co-ordination of the Services except through the agency of a Ministry of Defence, but it is not possible to create such a body at the present time, nor will it be possible for a considerable time. In the interim the only steps which are open to us are to create machinery for pooling the administrative functions of the three arms and to create a common staff brain, from whose exertions in the future the responsible advice given to the Cabinet of the day in regard to matters of defence must and can only effectively originate".

21. The interim steps referred to by Mr Churchill were the appointment of a Committee, under Sir Alfred Mond, whose place was later taken by Lord Weir, to consider the amalgamation of the common Services of the Navy, Army and Air Force, and, later, of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence under the Minister of Education, on the question of establishing a joint Staff College for the three Services. Lord Weir's Committee reported that "the amalgamation of the common services would only be practicable if it formed part of a comprehensive scheme of reorganisation which provided for the establishment of a Ministry to control a defence force in which the identity of the Navy, Army and Air Force had been merged". They recommended, however, a complete scheme for co-ordinating the common services, which has since been adopted by the Cabinet and is being put in operation. The report of Mr Wood's Committee, proposing a scheme for the formation of a Joint Staff College, has been circulated to this Committee and is now before the Committee of Imperial Defence.

22. In view of the uncertainty as to what is meant by the term "Ministry of Defence", the Committee thought it desirable to approach some of those who have advocated this solution to the problem of co-ordination, as well as other outside authorities, in order to ascertain their views on the subject. Among the outside experts who were good enough to give the Committee the benefit of their experience on this subject, there were only two advocates of a Ministry of Defence, and each of them contemplated its formation by different methods. Sir Eric Geddes proposed to achieve co-ordination of the Services by the creation of a single Secretary of State for "Warfare" or "Defence", with responsibility for the three Services. Under the Secretary of State he would put the Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry, each of which would be under a Sub-Minister. These Sub-Ministers should not be eligible for Cabinet rank, as that would make for departmental competition between them. Among themselves they would be equal in importance and would bear the same relation to the Secretary of State

as a Parliamentary Under Secretary holds to his Ministerial chief to-day. The Sub-Ministers would preside respectively at the Board of Admiralty, Army Council and Air Council, which would remain more or less as at present. The Secretary of State would have a very small office, containing a Statistical Accountant and a Council consisting of the Sub-Ministers of the Navy, Army and Air Force, with two members each from the Board of Admiralty, Army Council and Air Council. The Secretary of State would have to obtain the endorsement of the Committee of Imperial Defence "before his estimates and his provisions were taken to the Cabinet". Sir Eric Geddes added proposals for organisation after the outbreak of war, which it is unnecessary to enter into here.

23. Major-General Sir Frederick Sykes advocated a Ministry of Defence by means of a form of fusion or amalgamation of the existing Service departments. He considered that "the real solution lies in definite, unified, supreme control by a Defence Ministry, with the Prime Minister as independent Chairman, and a joint Staff which would really think out defence as a whole". Failing this policy of perfection, General Sykes would "support every measure which will pave the way for such control". He would achieve this by "the real strengthening of the mandate and constitution of the Committee of Imperial Defence. In his view, the Committee should frame estimates for defence for the three Services, and a special section should be formed for the specific purpose of jointly framing and supervising major schemes and measures of defence. As many Services as possible should be unified. There should be a joint boy-mechanic training, a joint Cadet College, a joint Staff course, &c. The question of the amalgamation of similar Services should be reopened".

24. The proposals of the remaining outside authorities had many points in common. They all laid stress on the need for co-ordination. They all proposed that this co-ordination should be effected through the Committee of Imperial Defence. They nearly all admitted, either directly or by implication, that the work of directing the Committee was too heavy for the Prime Minister to undertake single-handed and that he should have the assistance of a Minister, as Vice-Chairman, who could give most of his time to this task. Several laid stress on the importance of securing the co-operation of the Dominions in the Committee of Imperial Defence.

25. In detail, the proposals varied considerably. Lord Midleton and Lord Haldane did not indicate any particular developments of the existing Committee of Imperial Defence, the case for which was summed up by the latter in the following terms:

> "The Committee of Imperial Defence is an organisation that has nothing quite resembling it in any other country. The reason is that no other nation resembles the British Empire, with its Island centre for a number of countries, some of which are self-governing, and all of which are united by unwritten and elastic obligations. We have evolved this Committee to meet Dominion as well as Home necessities, and to meet the former it is far better adapted than any special Ministry of Defence could be. ... … … But a still more distinctive

feature of the existing organisation is that it has been evolved to meet a situation where sea power comes first and where the other two Services are, in some measure, merely its adjuncts, however great and important. That is why the scope of the Committee must be sufficiently catholic to admit of the co-operation within it of distinguished experts at the head of very different Services".

The above extract was specifically endorsed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

26. Major-General Seely, Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, Major-General Sir J H Davidson, MP, and Lieut-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, MP, all advocated definite extensions of the Committee of Imperial Defence organisation, which resembled one another in principle while differing in detail.

27. General Seely's principal proposal was "that a Minister must be appointed, under whatever title be deemed expedient, whose sole duty it will be to secure the co-operation of the three Services, reporting fully to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. I suggest that he should be styled 'Minister of Defence and Vice-President of the Committee of Imperial Defence'". General Seely strongly advocated the retention of the civilian heads of the three Service Departments in their existing status as members of the Cabinet. "Great Government Offices", he writes, "cannot possibly be controlled efficiently by any man without Cabinet rank. I am sure that anyone who has had experience of Great Government Offices would agree with this view".

28. Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson's proposals are summarised in his Memorandum as follows:

"(a) Neither a Ministry of Defence nor a combined Imperial General Staff will provide, or help to provide, the co-ordinating authority we require.

"(b) Controlling authority, in its true meaning, must be vested in the supreme executive power, the Cabinet, and it cannot be placed elsewhere.

"(c) Experience has shown that we cannot conduct a great war through the medium of a Cabinet of twenty or more Ministers, and that the duty is best assigned to a small body of Ministers having no other duties to perform. As this organisation is not feasible in peace time, its place should be taken by a Council of Imperial Defence, which will form a nucleus of war.

"(d) In order to furnish this Council with the professional assistance needed, there should be, working under it, a Technical Committee, charged with the investigation of all operative and administrative questions, and with presenting them, with recommendations thereon, to the Council for consideration and approval.

"(e) In time of war a Minister of Supply and a Minister of Manpower should be appointed and a War Cabinet should be formed. The latter, assisted and advised by the three Chiefs of Staff, would take over the duties in (c) and (d).

"(f) Every effort should be made to enlist the co-operation of the Dominions, both as to State policy and war preparations".

29. The following details of Sir William Robertson's plan may be added. The Committee would be composed very much as heretofore. In addition:

"The Prime Minister would, of course, be President. It would be the duty of the three Chiefs of Staff to advise the Council on professional matters, the advice to be taken or left as Ministers may think best, but to be heard. These officers should, as was the War Cabinet system, attend the Council in an advisory capacity and not as members. I believe this procedure to be the best for both parties. Following the pre-war constitution of the Committee of Imperial Defence, a senior officer from each of the three Services should be included in the Council as members. Their experience would enable them to give valuable help both to Ministers and the Chiefs of Staff, and they would be specially useful to the former in cases where the latter might feel compelled to differ from each other in regard to professional matters upon which they were called upon to advise. If these three officers (unemployed) are not included in the Council, Ministers will have to decide for themselves professional questions about which their knowledge must necessarily be imperfect, and the soundness of their decisions will, therefore, remain largely a matter of chance".

30. Major General Sir J H Davidson, MP, referred the Committee to an article published by him in the Army Quarterly of January, 1921, in which he advocated a plan presented to the Government by the Parliamentary Army Committee in June, 1920, the essentials of which are contained in the following extract from a Minute addressed by the Committee to the Prime Minister (Mr Lloyd George):

"4. It is possible that the most practicable scheme under present conditions would be to create immediately a Standing Joint Defence Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, formed of the First Sea Lord, the CIGS, and the CAS, or officers appointed or deputed by them, together with representatives of the Self-Governing Dominions, of India, and of other Departments concerned.

"5. Whatever be the Advisory Body formed, the members of the Army Committee in the House of Commons are of opinion that it is essential:

"(I) That it should meet regularly and frequently.

"(II) That it should have a specially selected and permanent Secretariat to assist in its work, and to record its proceedings and conclusions.

"(III) That the Chairman of this Sub-Committee should be a Minister not in charge of one of the Great Departments of State, except on those occasions when the Prime Minister is himself present.

"6. Among the duties of the Standing Joint Defence Sub-Committee of the CID, should be included the following:

"To examine:

"(a) The Imperial Organisation for Defence.

"(b) The Estimates, in draft, with a view to ensuring due economy and efficiency.

"(c) Our Imperial responsibilities from the point of view of Defence.

"(d) The effect of scientific progress and inventions.

"(e) The problems of Strategy and Logistics.

"(f) The proposals of the League of Nations".

31. Lieut-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, MP, was a signatory of the Minute of the Parliamentary Army Committee referred to above, and his Memorandum gives a carefully thought-out scheme for applying the principles propounded therein. He recommended the retention of the present Committee of Imperial Defence with the title of Council of Imperial Defence, under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, with the Lord President of the Council as Vice-Chairman. In addition, he proposed the establishment of a Board of Defence, composed of the Ministerial and professional heads of the three Fighting Services, with a representative of the Treasury, meeting under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Defence, who might with advantage be called Minister of Defence. The Chairman should have power of initiative in all matters of strategy, policy, and finance affecting more than one Service. The duties proposed for this "Board of Defence" under its Chairman are similar in character to those suggested by the Parliamentary Army Committee for the Standing Joint Defence Sub-Committee, but worked out in greater detail.

32. An essential part of General Hunter-Weston's plan was that the Council of Imperial Defence should function actively and regularly, and that the Dominions and India should be represented at its meetings. He advocated that, as no one man can fulfil the functions of Chief of the General War Staff of our Defence Forces, the office should be put in commission and carried out by the professional heads of the three Services sitting together in Committee.

33. In the view of the Committee the proposals for a Minister of Defence are effectually disposed of in the following passage from Lord Haldane's Memorandum:

> "In the way of the institution of a general Minister of Defence there are obvious difficulties. If established with anything like adequate power of control, such a Minister would be bound to interfere in administration, just as the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War are bound to be ready to do so, by reason of their direct responsibility for it to Parliament. The Minister of Defence would, indeed, be looked to as responsible not only for efficiency, but for economy. He would therefore require a considerable and varied staff, whose duties would overlap and duplicate those of existing departmental staffs. What would be the relation of this new staff to the staffs under the three Ministers at present responsible to Parliament, and what would be the constitutional and practical relationship of the new Minister of Defence to the three older Ministers? The former would, I think, be in considerable danger of proving himself to be either too great or too little. He would be too little if the departmental staffs developed to their full inherent capacity and were working out general military policy in conference. In such a case the Prime Minister would be the only person possessed of authority sufficient to enable him to intervene effectively.
>
> "With the Cabinet behind him, he is in a position to exercise influence as no Minister of Defence could.
>
> "If, indeed, the Minister of Defence were to make himself, on the other hand, very powerful by equipping himself with an effective administrative organisation sufficient for direct control of the three Services, he might well become a rival of the Prime Minister himself. The difficulty does not exhaust itself here. The first Government that made such an appointment would probably make it with great care and with sufficient regard to necessary qualifications in the occupant of the position. But if a subsequent Government came in that were not deeply interested in defence, the temptation would be strong to give the office to an influential politician distinguished, perhaps, mainly for debating gifts".

34. To these objections may be added the following, urged by Lord Midleton:

> "It is surely beyond human power for one man to get his mind impregnated with the pros and cons of large changes in three totally distinct Services within the limited time for which Parliamentary Chiefs hold office. The fact that there have been eleven changes in the Office of Secretary of State for War in the last eleven years has been very prejudicial to the economy and possibly to the efficiency of the Army. First Lords of the Admiralty attach the greatest importance to their official tours for elucidating by contact with Naval Officers not employed at the Admiralty the problems submitted to them. The overworked Minister of Defence would be quite unable to find time for such excursions.

> "A further difficulty would be the Parliamentary one, since it is often necessary for the Minister in charge to give a pledge during a debate as to the course which his Department will take. Not infrequently it has happened that by far the most efficient Head of the Defence Committee would be a Member of the House of Lords; … … … If the supreme executive responsibility of all three Departments were to be massed in one Minister it would be imperative that he should sit in the House of Commons, and attendance in the House of Commons would add immeasurably to the already multifarious duties imposed on him".

35. The closely-connected question of a combined Staff is disposed of equally effectively by Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson in the following terms:

> "The formation of a combined Imperial General Staff, consisting of Military, Naval and Air Force officers, working under a Chief (a soldier, or sailor, or airman) responsible to the Government, or to a Minister of Defence, for working out plans of operations on land, on sea, and in the air, and, according to some, endowed with 'financial and strategical powers', is even more fantastical as well as dreadfully mischievous. An important corner-stone in military organisation is that he who makes a plan ought to be responsible for its execution and stake his reputation upon it. Consequently, the Chief of this proposed combined Staff must draft and issue the orders of the Government to all the Generals and Admirals and Air Officers entrusted with the control of the armies, the fleets and the air forces. The confusion that would arise in the three War Departments and at the front, if any such ill-considered system as this were adopted, is quite inconceivable. Further, this Staff would directly interpose between the three Chiefs of Staff and the Cabinet, and there could be no more pernicious system than that".

36. The Committee considered these criticisms to be overwhelming as against all proposals for setting up a Ministry of Defence or any Minister of Defence with authority overriding that of the Ministers at the head of the Service Departments, or a combined Staff. After careful consideration of the various proposals laid before them, after a full discussion with the Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services, and after a close examination of the constitution and the present methods of work of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Committee reached the following conclusions, which were adopted by the Government and presented to Parliament in August last (Cmd 1938):

> "(1) It is undesirable and impracticable to supersede the Ministerial heads of the three Fighting Services by making them subordinates of a Minister of Defence; the alternative plan for an amalgamation of the three Service Departments is equally impracticable.
>
> "(2) On the other hand, the existing system of co-ordination by the Committee of Imperial Defence is not sufficient to secure full initiative and responsibility for defence as a whole and requires to be defined and strengthened.

"(3) Under the existing system the Committee of Imperial Defence, an advisory and consultative body, enquires into and makes recommendations in regard to the issues of defence policy and organisation which are brought before it. The power of initiative lies with the Government Departments and with the Prime Minister.

"(4) This system, though invaluable up to a point, does not make any authority, except the Prime Minister, who can only devote a small part of his time and attention to defence questions, directly responsible for the initiation of a consistent line of policy directing the common action of the three or any two of the three Services, taking into account of the reactions of the three Services upon one another.

"(5) While, therefore, the existing system of departmental initiative will continue, the responsibility for the wider initiative referred to above in paragraph (4) will also rest with the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence acting under the general direction of the Committee of Imperial Defence and with the assistance of the three Chiefs of Staff.

"(6) In accordance with the terms of the Treasury Minute of the 4th May, 1904, constituting the Committee of Imperial Defence in its present form, the Committee of Imperial Defence will continue to consist of the Prime Minister, as President, with such other members as, having regard to the nature of the subject to be discussed, he may from time to time summon to assist him. In pursuance of a decision by the Prime Minister, the Committee places on record that the following should be members:

"The Chairman (Deputy to the Prime Minister).
"The Secretary of State for War.
"The Secretary of State for Air.
"The First Lord of the Admiralty.
"The Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Financial Secretary.
"The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
"The Secretary of State for the Colonies.
"The Secretary of State for India.
"The Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services.
"The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury as head of the Civil Service.

"In addition to these, other British or Dominion Ministers of the Crown and other officials, or persons having special qualifications, will be summoned as members by the President according to the nature of the business.

"(7) The functions of the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence will be:

"(i) To preside over the Committee of Imperial Defence in the absence of the Prime Minister.

"(ii) To report to the Prime Minister (when he himself has not presided) and to the Cabinet the recommendations of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

"(iii) In matters of detail, to interpret the decisions of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet thereupon to the Departments concerned.

"(iv) Assisted by the three Chiefs of Staff, as laid down in paragraph (5) above, to keep the defence situation as a whole constantly under review so as to ensure that defence preparations and plans and the expenditure thereupon are co-ordinated and framed to meet policy, that full information as to the changing naval, military and air situation may always be available to the Committee of Imperial Defence and that resolutions as to the requisite action thereupon may be submitted for its consideration.

"(8) In addition to the functions of the Chiefs of Staff as advisers on questions of sea, land or air policy respectively, to their own Board or Council, each of the three Chiefs of Staff will have an individual and collective responsibility for advising on defence policy as a whole, the three constituting, as it were, a Super-Chief of a War Staff in Commission. In carrying out this function they will meet together for the discussion of questions which affect their joint responsibilities.

"(9) Questions relating to co-ordination of expenditure may be entertained by the Committee of Imperial Defence when referred to it by the Cabinet. The Committee (subject to any directions by the Cabinet) will consider such questions in the light of the general defence policy of the Government, and of the strategical plans drawn up to give effect to that policy in time of war.

"(10) The Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence will continue to act as liaison officers between the Chairman of the Committee and the Service Departments. The staff of the Committee will be strengthened by the addition of an Assistant Secretary to be nominated by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for Air, whose status will be identical with that of the three existing Assistant Secretaries nominated by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for India, and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

"(11) The Standing Defence Sub-Committee is suppressed, and its past proceedings will be merged into those of the Committee of Imperial Defence".

The above recommendations are now in operation.

**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE DOMINIONS AND INDIA**

37. There is one point in the above conclusions on which the Committee, in this their final Report, would like to add a few observations, namely, regarding the provision in Conclusion (6)

for the extension of invitations to representatives of the Dominions to attend as members of the Committee. From the earliest days of the Committee of Imperial Defence, representatives of the Dominions have from time to time been invited to take part in its proceedings, and the Secretary of State for India has for many years attended its meetings.

38. The subject of Dominion representative was discussed at the Committee in May, 1911, when all the Dominions were represented and the following resolution was passed:

> "That one or more representatives appointed by the respective Governments of the Dominions should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, when questions of naval and military defence affecting the Overseas Dominions are under consideration".

39. Before the war every effort was made to give effect to the above resolution by taking advantage of the presence in this country of representatives of the Dominions, to invite them, with the concurrence of their own Governments, to the meetings of the Committee and of its Sub-Committees. Since the war no such opportunities have offered, though in fact many of the meetings of the Imperial Conference, 1921, were analogous to meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence; those present included the regular members of the Committee, the subjects were mainly those which naturally fall to the Committee, and the secretarial work was supplied by the Committee in co-operation with the Colonial Office, the Dominions and India.* Moreover, both before and since the war the Dominions and India have been furnished with many of the Reports of the committee of Imperial Defence.

## PART IV – THE RELATIONS OF THE NAVY AND THE AIR FORCE

40. The question of the relations of the Navy and the Air Force in regard to fleet air work had already been the subject of acute and prolonged controversy, and was recognised to require investigation of a detailed character. As already mentioned, therefore, this question was referred to a special Sub-Committee composed of:

Lord Balfour.
Lord Peel
Lord Weir.

Their Report, together with the remarks of the main Committee thereon, were adopted by the Government, and presented to Parliament last August. (Cmd 1938). These Reports are annexed to this Report for convenience of reference.

* *Note by the Chairman* – This is equally true of the Imperial Conference, 1923. The question of defence was discussed by the plenary conference at great length, and in similar conditions to those mentioned in this Report. In addition, important discussions took place at the Admiralty and Air Ministry. (See the Official Summary of the proceedings of the Imperial Conference, Cmd 1987).

## PART V – THE RELATIONS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE

41. The question of the relations of the Army and the Air Force formed the subject of an Interim Report by the Chairman to the Cabinet, dated 30th June, 1923, the effective portions of which are contained in the following extracts:

> "The Secretary of State for War recently circulated to the Sub-Committee a Memorandum by the General Staff on this question … … …
>
> "The views of the General Staff are contained in Part I of that Memorandum, and are summarised on p4 in the following terms:
>
> > '"(a) The air units, which are an integral part of the Fleet and Air formations (including probably lighter-than-air formations) capable of co-operating with the Fleet on the high seas, to be under the Admiralty.
> >
> > '" (b) The air units, which are an integral part of Army formations and Air formations required to co-operate with the Army (including Air Forces allotted to the general pool for war and to home defence), to be under the War Office.
> >
> > '" (c) Civil aviation, research, experiment and supply to be under the Air Ministry, which, relieved of all responsibility for the employment of Air Forces in peace and war, could be much reduced.
> >
> > '"Each of the three Departments (Naval, Military and Civil) would estimate for its own air requirements, the whole being co-ordinated by the Committee of Imperial Defence before presentation to Parliament'.
>
> "The view of the Sub-Committee was to the effect that the above distribution of responsibility was unsatisfactory, and that if the Air Forces of this country were to be developed to the utmost it was necessary to retain the Royal Air Force as a separate Service, and that progress would not be so great if the War Office proposals were adopted. The conclusion of the Sub-Committee was:
>
> > '"That they were unable to accept the views expressed by the General Staff in Part I of their Paper"'.

The Secretary of State for War, while strongly supporting the General Staff solution, expressed the readiness of the War Office to co-operate in furthering the scheme as accepted.

The Cabinet adopted the above Report on the 9th July and confirmed the present arrangement under which the Royal Air Force is administered by the Air Ministry as a separate Department of State.

## PART VI – THE STRENGTH OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

42. The last item in the Terms of Reference is the standard to be aimed at for defining the strength of the Air Force for purposes of Home and Imperial Defence.

43. This question was dealt with in an Interim Report, dated the 12th June, 1923.

This Report was approved by the Cabinet on the 20th June, 1923, and the following announcement of the Government's policy based thereon was made in both Houses of Parliament on the same date:

> "The Government have come to the following conclusions with reference to British Air power:
>
> "In addition to meeting the essential Air power requirements of the Navy, Army, Indian and Overseas commitments, British Air power must include a Home Defence Air Force of sufficient strength adequately to protect us against Air attack by the strongest Air Force within striking distance of this country.
>
> "It should be organised in part on a regular and permanent military basis, and in part on a territorial or reserve basis, but so arranged as to ensure that sufficient strength will be immediately available for purposes of defence. The fullest possible use to be made of civilian labour and facilities.
>
> "In the first instance, the Home Defence Force should consist of 52 squadrons, to be created with as little delay as possible, and the Secretary of State for Air has been instructed forthwith to take the preliminary steps for carrying this decision into effect. The result of this proposal will be to add 34 squadrons to the authorised strength of the Royal Air Force. The details of the organisation will be arranged with a view to the possibility of subsequent expansion, but before any further development is put in hand the question should be re-examined in the light of the then Air strength of foreign Powers.
>
> "In conformity with our obligation under the Covenant of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government would gladly co-operate with other Governments in limiting the strength of air armaments on lines similar to the Treaty of Washington in the case of the Navy, and any such arrangements, it is needless to say, would govern the policy of air expansion set out in this statement". (Parliamentary Debates, 26th June, 1923).

44. In order to arrive at the total standard of strength for the Royal Air Force, it is necessary to add to the forces for Home Defence the strength of:

> Royal Air Force Units serving with the Navy.

The Air Forces required for co-operation with the Army.
The Air Forces to be maintained by the Air Ministry to fulfil their responsibilities in Iraq and Palestine.

45. It is not possible at the present time to make a recommendation as to the ultimate standard to be aimed at for any of the Services mentioned in paragraph 44. As regards the Royal Air Force Units serving with the Navy, the ultimate strength in war will be determined in the main by the number of first line aeroplanes which can be carried by the Fleet, that is to say, by carriers, battleships and light cruisers.

46. As regards the Air Forces for co-operation with the Army, the Secretary of State for Air has given an assurance to the Secretary of State for War that any requirements will be fully satisfied, subject to Treasury approval. The actual figures require further detailed discussion between the Chiefs of the General Staffs. This consultation was held up pending the decision on the relations of the Army and the Air Force. The Committee recommend that these discussions should be pushed forward as rapidly as possible by the Chiefs of Staff under the new procedure proposed in Part III.

47. Similarly, the ultimate establishment of the Air Forces abroad involves many uncertain factors, such as the future of Iraq and Palestine, and the number of machines eventually to be provided for Singapore.

48. The Committee are not concerned in the number of squadrons in India, which are paid for by India and are a matter of negotiation between the Government of India, the India Office and the Air Ministry. The subject, however, has recently been fully explored by the Committee on Indian Military Requirements.

49. In the above circumstances, the Committee can only record their recommendation that there must be sufficient air strength for the Navy, the Army, the Overseas Garrisons and Home Defence. The squadrons and machines authorised up to the 1st April, 1924, exclusive of Home Defence, are as follows:

| | | | Machines |
|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom – | | | |
| (a) | (i) | *Fleet Air Arm* – For embarkation in carrier in all waters (13 flights) | 78 |
| | (ii) | *Naval Co-operation* – Flying Boats (1 flight) | 5 |
| (b) | | Army co-operation (2 squadrons) | 24 |
| (c) | | Reserve (2 squadrons) | 36 |
| Mediterranean – | | | |
| Seaplanes (1 flight) | | | 6 |

| | |
|---|---|
| (Aircraft for embarkation in carriers shown under United Kingdom above) | |
| Egypt (3 squadrons) | 34 |
| Palestine and Transjordania (1⅓ squadrons) | 16 |
| Aden (1 flight) | 4 |
| Iraq (8 squadrons) | 92 |
| Total | 295 |
| India (6 squadrons) | 72 |
| Grand Total of machines | 367 |

*Note* – Army co-operation machines are not differentiated except in the United Kingdom.

**AIRSHIPS**

50. A question which is closely related to the main inquiry is that of airships, which had been referred to the Committee of Imperial Defence before the appointment of this Committee. At the first meeting this question was remitted to an Inter-Departmental Committee composed of representatives of the Admiralty, Air Ministry, and Treasury, which was set up on the initiative of the Air Ministry, and was asked to report direct to the Committee of Imperial Defence. The policy of the Government on this question was announced in Parliament on the 26th July in the following terms:

> "The question of the development of airships has recently been considered by the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Imperial Shipping Committee. The Committee of Imperial Defence attaches considerable strategic value to airships, whilst the Imperial Shipping Committee considers that it is by means of an airship service that the carriage of mails can most cheaply be expedited to the Far East and Australia.
>
> "The Government have, therefore, decided to resume the development of airships, and to proceed, if possible, by means of a commercial service rather than by State operation.
>
> "Proposals have been placed before them by the Hon and gallant Member for Uxbridge (Lieutenant-Commander Burney), under which a bi-weekly service of six large airships to India will eventually be set up. The Government have accepted the scheme in principle, subject to the details of the contract being satisfactorily settled by the Treasury. The House of Commons will have an opportunity of considering the scheme when the details have been provisionally agreed.

"The Dominions are being informed of this decision, and it is hoped to discuss the question at the Imperial Conference with a view to their co-operation in the scheme.

"The administration of the scheme in so far as it is a matter of commercial aviation will come under the Air Ministry".†

## PART VII – SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

51. The conclusions and recommendations of this Report may be summarised as follows:

*Co-operation and Correlation of the Services (paragraph 19).*

(a) While the Committee do not put forward any suggestion to change the existing division of responsibility between the three Services as described in paragraph 10, they recommend that the responsibilities of the Navy and the Air Force in regard to the protection of communications in the narrow seas should form the subject of further investigation. The Committee further recommend that experiment in respect of the problems of air attack and defence at sea should be given due weight in Admiralty and Air Ministry programmes, in order to secure on the basis of practical experience the fullest measure of unity of professional opinion.

(b) The principal need as regards co-operation and correlation is closer co-ordination, which is dealt with in Part III of this Report.

(c) The principle that in all belligerent operations in which more than one Service is concerned, one of the three Services should be selected as a "predominant partner" to co-ordinate the other Services should be examined by the Committee of Chiefs of Staffs.

(d) While the menace of attack from the air has greatly increased, and necessitates a strong Home Defence Air Force, as proposed in Part VI of this Report, the three Staffs are agreed that in existing conditions the liability of the country to sea-borne invasion has considerably diminished as compared with pre-war standards.

*Co-ordination of the Services (paragraph 36).*

(e) It is undesirable and impracticable to supersede the Ministerial heads of the three fighting Services by making them subordinates of a Minster of Defence; the alternative plan for an amalgamation of the three Service Departments is equally impracticable.

(f) On the other hand, the existing system of co-ordination by the Committee of Imperial Defence is not sufficient to secure full initiative and responsibility for defence as a whole, and requires to be defined and strengthened.

† See Imperial Economic Conference, 1923. Summary of Conclusions, page 9 (Cmd 1990); also Record of Proceedings and Documents, page 351 et seq (Cmd 2009).

(g) Under the existing system the Committee of Imperial Defence, an advisory and consultative body, inquires into and makes recommendations in regard to the issues of defence policy and organisation which are brought before it. The power of initiative lies with the Government Departments and with the Prime Minister.

(h) This system, though invaluable up to a point, does not make any authority, except the Prime Minister, who can only devote a small part of his time and attention to defence questions, directly responsible for the initiation of a consistent line of policy directing the common action of the three or any two of the three Services, taking account of the reactions of the three Services upon one another.

(i) While, therefore, the existing system of departmental initiative will continue, the responsibility for the wider initiative referred to above in paragraph (h) will also rest with the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence acting under the general direction of the Committee of Imperial Defence and with the assistance of the three Chiefs of Staff.

(j) In accordance with the terms of the Treasury Minute of the 4th May, 1904, constituting the Committee of Imperial Defence in its present form, the Committee of Imperial Defence will continue to consist of the Prime Minister, as President, with such other members as, having regard to the nature of the subject to be discussed, he may from time to time summon to assist him. In pursuance of a decision by the Prime Minister, the Committee places on record that the following should be members:

The Chairman (Deputy to the Prime Minister).
The Secretary of State for War.
The Secretary of State for Air.
The First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Financial Secretary.
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Secretary of State for India.
The Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services.
The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury as head of the Civil Service.

In addition to these, other British or Dominion Ministers of the Crown and other officials, or persons having special qualifications, will be summoned as members by the President according to the nature of the business.

(k) The functions of the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence will be:

(i) To preside over the Committee of Imperial Defence in the absence of the Prime Minister.

(ii) To report to the Prime Minister (when he himself has not presided) and to the Cabinet the recommendations of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

(iii) In matters of detail, to interpret the decisions of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet thereupon to the Departments concerned.

(iv) Assisted by the three Chiefs of Staff, as laid down in paragraph (i) above, to keep the defence situation as a whole constantly under review so as to ensure that defence preparations and plans and the expenditure thereupon are co-ordinated and framed to meet policy, that full information as to the changing naval, military and air situation may always be available to the Committee of Imperial Defence and that resolutions as to the requisite action thereupon may be submitted for its consideration.

(l) In addition to the functions of the Chiefs of Staff as advisers on questions of sea, land or air policy respectively, to their own Board or Council, each of the three Chiefs of Staff will have an individual and collective responsibility for advising on defence policy as a whole, the three constituting, as it were, a Super-Chief of a War Staff in Commission. In carrying out this function they will meet together for the discussion of questions which affect their joint responsibilities.

(m) Questions relating to co-ordination of expenditure may be entertained by the Committee of Imperial Defence when referred to it by the Cabinet. The Committee (subject to any directions by the Cabinet) will consider such questions in the light of the general defence policy of the Government, and of the strategical plans drawn up to give effect to that policy in time of war.

(n) The Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence will continue to act as liaison officers between the Chairman of the Committee and the Service Departments. The staff of the Committee will be strengthened by the addition of an Assistant Secretary to be nominated by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for Air, whose status will be identical with that of the three existing Assistant Secretaries nominated by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for India and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

(o) The Standing Defence Sub-Committee is suppressed, and its past proceedings will be merged into those of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

*The Relations of the Navy and the Air Force (paragraph 40).*

(p) See Annex.

*The Relations of the Army and the Air Force (paragraph 41).*

(q) No change in the existing relations is recommended.

*The Strength of the Royal Air Force (paragraphs 42 to 49).*

(r) The standard of strength of the Royal Air Force is the sum of the following:

The Home Defence Air Force.
The Royal Air Force Units serving with the Navy.
The Air Forces required for co-operation with the Army.
The Air Forces maintained by the Royal Air Force to fulfil their responsibilities in Iraq and Palestine.

The figures, excluding those for the Home Defence Air Force, so far as they can at present be arrived at, are given in paragraph 49.

(s) The Air Forces required for co-operation with the Army should be worked out as soon as possible (paragraph 46).

(Signed) SALISBURY *(Chairman)*.
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.
CURZON OF KEDLESTON.
DEVONSHIRE.
DERBY.
PEEL.
SAMUEL HOARE.
L S AMERY.
BALFOUR.
WEIR.

M P A HANKEY *(Secretary)*

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, SW1
*November 15, 1923.*

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