



C I T I Z E N S   A N D   S O L D I E R S

THE DEFENCE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1836 - 1901

by

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Thesis presented to the Department of History,  
University of Adelaide, as part fulfilment of  
the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Canberra, 1970.

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PREFACE

The work deals with the problem of defence in a society of free settlers who had, by the middle of the nineteenth century, accepted the principle of universal military service. The demand for a defence force first arose from the necessity to maintain law and order. As the century progressed, South Australians became concerned with the safety of their littoral districts. They realised that the Royal Navy would not always be in a position to prevent lone raiders from attacking Adelaide and its port facilities, although the capability of the Royal Navy to intercept large invasion forces was never doubted and was, in fact, the basic premise on which all defence appreciations were based. Consequently, coastal fortifications like Fort Glanville and Fort Largs in South Australia, were intended exclusively to counteract those raiders who might escape the vigilance of the Royal Navy, while the federal forts on Thursday Island and at King George Sound were designed to facilitate the Royal Navy's task of protecting Imperial communications with the Australian continent.

With the expansion of the Empire and an increase in the colonising activities of non-English powers in the Pacific, there developed in the mid-eighties a dual loyalty in the Australian colonies. The colonists' initial loyalty had been towards their own hearths and homes. Had England then become involved in a major conflagration, some of the colonies would have doubtless remained neutral. The neutralist, and at

times even separatist, sentiment was quite strong in South Australia; the Paradise of Dissent would only be safe if the Colony kept aloof from Empire defence. However, the bonds of kinship and, more importantly, the realisation that Empire defence had tangible advantages, fostered a loyalty to Empire which expressed itself, first in offers, and subsequently in actual military assistance to England, and also in a growing inclination to participate in Imperial defence generally.

The organisation of South Australia's defence effort throughout the century continuously faced two issues. One issue concerned the type of military force best suited to the Colony. Should this Colony rely on British regulars, or on a compulsorily enrolled militia; on a partially paid volunteer force or on a voluntarily enlisted force receiving no pay whatsoever? The other issue concerned the strategic framework of the defence effort. Should the Colony concentrate on a mobile force, or should the major effort be expended on fixed defences and on their logical extension, that is, on naval forces protecting the approaches to Adelaide. The question of the type of force became a political issue, particularly after the withdrawal of British regular troops. The Colony's more radical elements supported the principle of universal service, but treated a wholly voluntary (unpaid) force with a certain amount of political suspicion, while the professional soldiers largely rejected the idea of an unpaid volunteer force for its inherent military ineffectiveness. Unpaid volunteering did find favour with the well-to-do classes, anxious to emulate the relatively successful volunteer movement in England, drawn from strata similar to their own. Eventually,

the Colony created a force of citizen soldiers, without the traditional labels of militia men and volunteers, soldiers who could be compulsorily enlisted and who were paid for the time spent on training.

The emphasis on fixed defences in the seventies and eighties resulted in the construction of the forts at Glanville and at Largs, with H.M.C.S. Protector providing the flexibility necessary to prevent an enemy from landing out of the range of the fort. As naval gunnery developed, the value of fixed defences decreased, and the Colony strove towards improving her mobile defence forces. As a test of defence preparedness, the 1885 crisis showed up serious shortcomings. Thereafter, continuous improvements, aided by overseas military experts, the Colonial Defence Committee and the joint deliberations of military and naval colonial commandants, led to a defence capability which enabled the Colony, within one month, to raise, equip and train a contingent for the defence of Empire in South Africa at the turn of the century.

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CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

UNEASY FOUNDATIONS 1830-1841

IN CONSIDERATION OF BEING ALLOWED A FREE PASSAGE  
ALTHOUGH ABOVE THE AGE OF 30 YEARS, I HEREBY ENGAGE  
TO ACT AS A MILITIA MAN OR SPECIAL CONSTABLE WHEN  
CALLED UPON BY THE GOVERNOR OR LOCAL MAGISTRATE OF  
THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Register of Free Passage  
Applications, 6th June, 1836.



1.1

The Problem: Defence in a Paradise of Dissent

In consideration of being allowed a free passage although above the age of 30 years, I hereby engage to act as a militia man or special constable when called upon by the Governor or Local Magistrate of the province of South Australia. (1)

In the early part of the 19th Century a group of reformers planned and eventually established a British settlement in the southern part of the Australian continent. They cherished 'the idealistic hope that the new Colony would be a land free from political patronage and the evils of the privileged church.' (2). The new Colony was to guarantee its inhabitants civil liberties independent of rank and property, equal social opportunities, and freedom of worship, not within the monopoly of the established church, but according to their beliefs and conscience.

The Colony was also to be the home of a new society which had its roots in the middle classes of England, particularly among those, inside and outside parliament, who had striven for reforms in the political, economic, and spiritual life of 19th century England. Reforms had fallen short of expectations. For instance, the strongly ingrained sense of property still prevented most members of the Tory and Whig parties from agreeing to secret voting, and from effectively ending the long-standing practices of patronage, nepotism and sinecures. Similarly, measures designed to bring about church reforms were not as effective as the people dissenting from the established church and, indeed, a great number of Anglicans, had hoped for. The dissenters had won personal civil equality with Anglicans, but the dissenting denominations still suffered from the difference in status between church and chapel. It was this disillusionment with reforms and the laissez-faire nature of the age that prepared the soil on

which colonisation movements could grow.

The colonisation movements were based on a number of philanthropic and economic ideas, such as ameliorating the fate of the paupers, the Wakefield theories, and the free settler schemes put into practice in New South Wales. These ideas crystallized into the plans of the National Colonisation Society, which endeavoured to combine the humanitarian principles of pauper emigration, advocated by Wilmot Horton, with the utilitarian ideas of exporting capital and free enterprise, formulated by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. The proceeds from the sale of land were to finance the migration of free settlers and land alienation was to be regulated to keep pace with the growth of the population. Colonisation was to be systematic, with no haphazard dispersion of population, but with concentration at the point of entry, spreading outwards as the number of people increased. (3) Colonisation along the proposed lines was thought to be an efficient way of utilizing the land resources of the Colony. These resources, when realised by sale, were to be used not only for financing migration, as Wakefield had envisaged, but also for defraying all public expenditure. As Torrens explained to the House of Commons:

The Colony of South Australia was established for the purpose of demonstrating ... the practicability of defraying the expense of conveying the unemployed ... to the unappropriated lands of colonies by means of the marketable value which the influx of an industrious population confers upon the valueless wastes of a new colony. (4)

To this formula Torrens gave the name of the 'self-supporting system' or 'the self-supporting principle'. It meant, as Douglas Pike has pointed out (5), that the increasing value of the unsold lands, and the proceeds from land sales, would support normal government activities such as education,

police protection and defence, which in other colonies were regarded as the responsibility of the British Government. In this manner the Colony of South Australia was to be established and run at no cost to the British taxpayer.

In 1831, the Colonisation Society submitted a 'Proposal to His Majesty's Government for founding a Colony on the Southern Coast of Australia' (6), of which regulation 5 read:

That the defence of the Colony shall be provided for by a militia to be composed of the whole male population of the Colony above the age of sixteen and under sixty. (7)

In other words, from the very beginning, the problem of defence exercised the minds of the early planners. And in those days defence generally meant two things: protection against the enemies of the Realm, and the maintenance of law and order within the Colony.

Defence against the enemies of the Realm was, in the first instance, vested in the Royal Navy. As long as the Navy maintained its supremacy, the colonies were protected against large scale invasion. The supremacy of the Navy meant 'to keep up a navy equal to the navies of any two powers that can be brought against us' (8). In the 18th century, these powers were understood to be the combined fleets of France and Spain. In the 19th century, there was the possibility of facing the naval forces of Russia, of the United States, and of France, either singly or in some form of combination. (9) Nobody in the colonies, early in the century, queried the protective capability of the Royal Navy. Later on some qualms were felt, when it was realised just how dependent British naval supremacy was on the economic scene in England. It was also becoming apparent/<sup>later</sup>that the demands for naval support made by the Foreign and Colonial Offices led to

dispersion of strength and to the proliferation of naval design, equipment and training, until finally it was doubtful whether the fleet was, in fact, prepared for an emergency (10).

The defence role of the Royal Navy was supplemented by the Imperial garrison system. Commenting that

our earliest and most rigorous colonies in North America defended themselves, as in fact they governed themselves ... Our second colonial policy was to govern and defend the Colonies from home (11),

Earl Grey implied that one of the purposes of the garrison system was to establish outward signs of British rule and of unity of Empire. Garrisons were also maintained for the purpose of manning strategic fortifications (Gibraltar), for the protection of refreshment facilities at naval stations, and for supporting the administration of convict settlements.

In addition, the Imperial garrison system aimed to forestall possible colonial intentions on the part of foreign powers. Such was the case when Major Edmund Lockyer founded a military post at King George Sound in Western Australia, on Christmas Day, 1826. Military garrisons of this nature were comparatively small. For instance, at King George Sound and at Port Essington in the North, the establishments rarely exceeded company strength. They had a purely defensive role and were not meant to be spring-boards for offensive operations, if only for the reason, stated somewhat sanctimoniously by Charles Clode in the opening remark of his work on the 'Military Forces of the Crown', that

the primary object for which the military forces of the Crown are retained in arms is the defence of the Realm; for offensive wars the law of England has made no provision. (12)

The Duke of Wellington is said to have advocated the garrison system as a means of keeping the major portion of the Army from the eyes of the British taxpayer. This policy was

probably never more apparent than at the conclusion of the Maori Wars. As Sir John Colomb was to observe much later -

The original causes for having troops in Australia were not military, but purely civil and we find them there in 1864, long years after the civil necessity for the presence of a military force had ceased. (13)

Returning from New Zealand, the British regiments spent several years in Australia, for little apparent reason other than perhaps to offer as many soldiers as possible the opportunity of discharge in the colonies, which, in turn, meant appreciable savings in transport costs. Another political advantage lay in stressing the humanitarian purposes of the garrisons in the colonies, since there was a widely accepted view in England that, unless police matters were controlled by the British military, colonial governments or colonial troops were likely to adopt a cruel and violent attitude towards their native population. (14)

Thus one role of the Imperial garrisons in the Australian colonies was to assist in the maintenance of law and order. The suppression of the Eureka Stockade revolt in 1854 and the quelling of the Sydney riots on New Year's Day 1850 are perhaps the two most outstanding examples of their police role. The military also contributed to the formation of the colonial police forces by providing commissioned ranks from its own supernumerary lists, maintained for that purpose. (15)

Such were the Imperial defence arrangements at the time when the National Colonisation Society submitted to the British Government its first proposals for the founding of the Colony of South Australia. To what extent, then, did questions of defence concern the planning for the 'Paradise of Dissent'? Since the planners considered a military force necessary, what forms of military tradition would best suit a society aspiring, almost from its inception, to responsible



government?

South Australia was too far removed from the lines of Imperial communications to warrant the establishment of a naval refreshment station on her soil. Nor was there any evidence, in the early decades of the 19th century, of hostile intentions on the part of non-British powers towards the lands around the southern gulfs of the Australian continent. There were no Imperial garrisons to be manned. The primary need for a military force, therefore, must have centred in the problem of maintaining law and order.

Here the planners had a number of choices. The force could be provided by a garrison of regular British soldiers. Alternatively, the force might be raised from the ranks of the colonists, either as a regular (standing) army on long service conditions, or as a part-time force, formed either by conscripting the citizens for national service or by enlisting the citizens as volunteers. Any alternative was bound to invite some objections. If the force was to be a regular British army garrison, then the practice would immediately conflict with Torrens' 'self-supporting principle', that is, the running of the Colony would involve the British Government in considerable expense. If the force was to be a standing army, raised, as in Britain, by the voluntary enlistment of what, in practice, were the ne'er-do-well elements of the community, would such an arrangement be economically feasible and politically and socially acceptable to the community at large? On the other hand, would it be practicable to conscript a part-time or a short service army composed of citizens? The latter system was very dear to the hearts of the radical elements of the community, but was not favoured by the propertied classes. Finally, would a part-time citizen army, raised by voluntary enlistment, constitute

an effective force?

As might be expected of a society which originated as a 'Paradise of Dissent', the emphasis from the beginning was on citizen-soldiery. Yet even citizen-soldiery could assume many forms. Planners and colonists throughout the 19th century were constantly being faced with the question of which pattern to follow: the British precedents, the changing Continental systems, or the American experience?

The Precedents : Citizen Soldiery in the  
Western World

Citizen soldiery in the Western world always implied three distinct systems, namely, militia, volunteers, and short-service, full-time standing forces, the latter usually compulsorily enlisted.

In the 19th century, militia was defined as

... a body of troops composed of citizens, regularly enrolled, but not permanently organised and not liable to service outside the county or district in which they are enrolled. (16)

The militia dated back to the Assize of Arms of 1181 (17), by which every able-bodied man between certain ages was constitutionally obliged to bear arms in the defence of his shire or county, either against an external enemy, or for the purpose of maintaining law and order. This meant compulsory military service within stipulated territorial limits. It meant, that every citizen was to be a soldier and that every militia man was, therefore, a citizen. Thus militia men became known as citizen soldiers, distinct from the hired mercenaries, or regular soldiers who, from the 17th century onwards, by virtue of their own legal code, were outside the status of ordinary citizens.

With the evolution of the British Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, the standing army assumed great military significance. It had superior training and the ability to serve anywhere, but

in an England where the Tories remembered the military despotism of Cromwell and the Whigs the large personal forces of the Stuarts, a Standing Army was not destined to be [politically] popular. (18)

Because of this political distrust, the standing (regular) army was regularised from 1689 onwards by the annual Mutiny Acts, and thus assumed a statutory rather than a constitutional

existence. The militia, on the other hand, was not subject to annual legislative measures and thus remained outside formal party politics. By virtue of its history, its long-standing county and personal associations the militia had become an idealised and sentimental paper army. It was the 'old constitutional force beloved by historians and military theorists' (19).

From a military point of view the militia had assumed some significance during the Napoleonic Wars. Its members manned the Martello towers, and other fortifications on the South Coast of England, at a time when the regular units were engaged on the Continent. In 1830 and 1831 some of the militia units were embodied, that is, called out for regular service under the direction of the Crown, to help restore public order during the riots in the agricultural southern areas of England, and in Manchester (20) (21).

Nevertheless, the militia could not be considered militarily efficient. The strength and establishment of the units varied greatly and the force lacked field artillery, engineers and cavalry, and was almost totally devoid of medical or service corps elements. The standard of training was low, and had little chance of improving, because the units received their training only during the annual camps, with no military activity during the rest of the year. In the 19th century England was changing from a predominantly rural to an urbanised and industrial society. While the 28-day camps were quite suitable for a force drawn from an agricultural population, they were inconvenient for a large sector of the urban community. The militia system was thus unpopular with employers, who wanted to maintain a stable and continuous labour force, and with employees, who wanted to keep their jobs.

Furthermore, the militia, which was originally based on universal service, had become selective through the introduction of the ballot system in 1751 (22). The system was open to abuses. Administration was in the hands of the county clerks, who could blackmail ballotees, or compulsorily hire parochial substitutes who were in turn liable to lose their jobs.

The elimination in 1852 of the compulsory provisions of the legislation (23) may have been due to the realisation that the militia system had become a social anachronism. In its heyday, the militia organisation had reflected the social hierarchy of the counties. The colonels were members of the landed gentry and more often than not sat in the House of Lords. The officers were chosen by the lord - lieutenant on the basis of their estate, and the soldiers were the county lads without a vote (24). In such a society the militia could be used for maintaining order on occasions when the causes were predominantly associated with the social background of the militia itself. In the 19th century, the weakened social links and affiliations between soldiers and officers lessened control over, and thus the efficiency of the units. Therefore, as an instrument for the maintenance of law and order the militia had lost most, if not all, of its significance to the emerging police forces in the cities.

It is not surprising that the people of England sought an alternative form of citizen army. The alternative was to adopt the voluntary principle which in the first few decades of the 19th century had attained considerable prominence in relation to church activities. The principle was not new in the military sphere. It had manifested itself in the formation of the Yeomanry, and of the early volunteer units. The Yeomanry units dated back to about 1760 and were first raised as cavalry ancillaries to the militia formations (22). The

Yeomen were country squires and tenant farmers. They provided their own horses and their own uniforms, and they were paid an annual contingent allowance of £2. The Yeomanry was an elite military force, employed in quelling civil disturbances. For instance, the Cheshire and Lancashire Yeomanry was involved in the massacre of Peterloo in 1819, and the Southern English counties' Yeomanry was put into the field against the reform bill agitators in 1830 and 1831 (20) (21). Earlier, in the convict colony of New South Wales, an elite yeomanry-type body, the Loyal Association, was formed for the suppression of the Irish rebellion in 1804, and in 1825 (25) Captain Edward MacArthur of the 39th Regiment made a strong plea for similar volunteers, to be commanded 'by those whose property and connections give them a strong local interest in the preservation of the public peace' (26).

While the Yeomen had their roots in agricultural and feudal England (27), the Volunteers were their counterpart from the urban middle classes. The Honourable Artillery Company, formed by the London merchants in 1537, was probably the first volunteer unit in British military history. A similar unit, the Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters, later to be known as Princess Victoria's Rifle Club, was a recognised volunteer unit by 1835. A number of volunteer units existed in London during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. These units were composed largely of professional people, such as the Temple Companies of Lawyers, dubbed by George III as the 'Devil's Own' (28) (29).

The volunteers were legalised in 1804 by the Volunteer Consolidation Act (44 Geo. III c 54). They were granted their own conditions of service which 'were not binding unless not

disallowed by the Crown' (30). The units were often supported by private subscription and were partially directed by the Committees of Subscribers. Their link with the Crown was via the lord-lieutenant and the Home Office. When called out for active service they were placed under the direction of the Horse Guards.

The War Office and Horse Guards doubted the effectiveness of volunteers, preferring long service conditions which alone guaranteed military proficiency. The militia colonels distrusted the volunteers because they suspected that volunteering was merely a means of avoiding compulsory militia service. Politically the volunteer movement was suspect, because the War Office and the Horse Guards, the traditional preserves of the landed gentry and the militia families, felt that volunteering was a movement supported by the rising professional and industrial middle classes, and was assuming, as Fortescue suggested, an egalitarian outlook along the lines of the voluntary social organisations formed early in the 19th century (31).

A volunteer movement could, in fact, be regarded as both the product and the servant of a society of free and somewhat radically minded citizens. In a colony like New South Wales, populated largely by actual or former convicts, and governed by staunch representatives of the establishment, there was really no logical alternative to raising an elite yeomanry force. By the same token, those who planned the southern Australian colony as a 'Paradise of Dissent' were neither inclined nor obliged to give arms to a privileged elite. Rather were they likely to endorse Rousseau's idea of a militia where 'every citizen shall be a soldier from duty,

none by profession and every citizen shall be ready but only when the need calls for it' (32). Unlike New South Wales, which initially simply followed the English precedent, the new settlers in the South must have considered other models of citizen-soldiery, both from Europe and from America. The volunteer movement in England did not develop into a pattern worth following until the latter half of the century. Repeated references by South Australian parliamentarians to the Swiss militia system suggest that this was one European model regarded with favour by those concerned with the defence of the young Colony.

The Swiss system required compulsory training in the 20-32 year age group, but allowed for volunteering prior to the legal age and for payment in lieu of service. However, the planners of the free Colony of South Australia would have been aware of the military and political implications of Rousseau's idea of a citizen army based on the Swiss precedent. They knew that the citizen conscripts had decisively defeated the cast-ridden professional forces of the absolute kings, and that the French citizen armies had changed the course of history after the cannonade at Valmy in 1792, when, as Marshal Foch put it, 'the wars of the kings were at an end and the wars of the peoples were beginning' (33). It was most unlikely that the planners would have related their concepts of defence directly to the ideas of the French Revolution. After all, they were Englishmen, and

the Englishman recognised no foreign nonsense of social equality ... and foreigners who screamed liberty, equality and fraternity, but disestablished their church and massacred their nobility were infidels and republicans (34).

Was the 'new constitutional force' developed by the Prussian military jacobins, Stein, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau,



Boyen and Clauswitz more likely to be acceptable to the planners? The new Prussian army began most auspiciously after the Prussian defeats at Jena and Auerstadt in 1806. Prussian military utilitarians realised that Napoleon could only be defeated by a national army of men who had been made aware that the defence of the country was the responsibility of every citizen. Scharnhorst, in particular, wanted an intimate union between army and nation, to be brought about by a hybrid system of a short-service standing army and a reserve militia, the Landwehr, both based on the principle of universal conscription. All eligible men not serving in the standing army were liable for service in the Landwehr, and all men not affected by either were to be enrolled in the Landsturm for home defence. In addition, there was a plan to appeal to the propertied classes to enrol themselves, at their own expense, in completely voluntary detachments, the Jaegers. The Prussian army reforms were embodied in the Wehrgesetz (Defence Act) of 1814/15 which stipulated that the Landwehr would fight alongside and under command of the regular army, but in peace-time would retain the character of a national militia, with territorial identity, distinct uniforms, its own administration and the right of officer election from the propertied classes.

As the century progressed the citizen soldier formations of the Prussian army, the Landwehr, the Landsturm and the Jaeger, became progressively less efficient, a situation first apparent during the autumn manoeuvres in 1818 and quite obvious to military observers as major cause of the Prussian capitulation to the Austrians at Ulmütz in 1850. The somewhat disorganized mobilisation of 1859 provided the pretext for incorporating the Landwehr, Landsturm and Jaegers into the standing army.

While South Australians may not have appreciated the military reasons for changing the army system in Prussia, they would have understood and emphatically rejected the political motives which hastened this development. In Prussia, where the reactionary elements had triumphed over their liberal opponents, citizen soldiers came to be suspected of radical if not revolutionary tendencies after 1820, and again after 1848, and the ruling classes did everything in their power to eliminate the citizen soldier formations (35) (36) (37).

The concept of the citizen soldier also flourished in the American colonies and may have influenced the planners of South Australia to a considerable extent, because the very first proposal for settlement in South Australia envisaged a Royal charter similar to the one granted the Plymouth Company of Virginia in the seventeenth century (38). The legal basis for citizen soldiering can be found in some of the early American charters (39). Article XII of the First Virginian Charter 1606, Article V of the New England Confederation 1643, the First Charter to Carolina 1662/3, the Second Charter to Massachusetts 1691 and the Charter to Georgia 1732, all granted the right to raise militias, either by reference to existing English statutes or by not specifically defining the right as disallowable. This principle was embodied as late as 1789 in Article 11 of the American Bill of Rights. During the French and Indian wars in the 18th century, the American citizen army units contained a number of voluntarily enlisted men. On their return to civilian life, veterans from these campaigns retained their militia obligations, keeping alive military knowledge and tactics. The statutes required every male to provide himself with a 'musket, shirt and cartouche box'.

The statutory muster days were usually glorious picnics, but they served to maintain the militia establishments which consisted of the compulsorily drafted men and the volunteers enlisted from time to time on an ad hoc basis. The ablest and youngest men were organised into companies available at a minute's notice (Minute Men System), and the remainder was formed into 'Alarm Companies' (40).

On the face of it, the American militias would appear to have been both politically and militarily acceptable to South Australian defence planners. However, there is hardly any evidence that the American precedent was consciously considered in South Australia. The reasons for this are not hard to establish. In the first instance, the military effectiveness of the American citizen soldiery was doubted, especially by professionals like Washington and Steuben, who never ceased to complain of the shortcomings of the citizen army, whose insistence on election of officers by their own men and reluctance to undergo regular training were the main bones of contention (41). Similar problems led to similar complaints in South Australia a hundred years later. The American system was further marred by inter-colonial rivalry and county jealousies which prevented units of one colony from coming to the aid of another. And even within the same colony the citizen soldier formations were not always prepared to serve beyond the shire boundaries. The aversion of the American militia units, including their volunteer elements, to undertake garrison duties on frontier posts forced the British to provide troops for forts along the West Virginia frontier in 1756, 1757, and again in 1775, just prior to the War of Independence (42). This military commitment led to the imposition of the Stamp

and Sugar Acts, introduced by the Granville ministry, in 1765 and 1764 respectively, to lighten the financial burden of the British taxpayer. The shortcomings of the American colonial defence system led to a re-involvement of the Crown in a manner which would have been totally unacceptable to South Australians. There was still another feature of the American system which would have found little favour in South Australia. The democratically organised colonial militias themselves, at times, assumed a political character, and the Bacon Rebellion in 1676 showed that 'the same force which fought Indians could also oppose authority' (43). Similarly in 1776, the revolutionary elements in Pennsylvania worked through the militia organisations, against the Assembly which was, at the time, opposed to independence. In another colony, the Committee of Privates objected to a general's appointment, made by the Assembly. In Maryland, the militia battalions in Ann Arundel County put forward a constitution in opposition to the government of the day, although the government had been constitutionally formed and was supported by the religious and commercial groups of the county.

It appears that neither European nor American precedents would have seriously influenced the planners of South Australia's defence. At first there were certain parallels. Just as in the European countries and in America, the citizen army in South Australia was considered to be an institution of a dissenting society. But the resemblance diminished as the century continued. In Imperial Germany, the political energies liberated in the early 19th century were channelled by Bismarck into the creation of a highly industrialised society, which would best be protected against its almost equally highly industrialised neighbours by a

highly efficient professional army, recruited by universal conscription. The American experience was based on a political philosophy analogous to South Australia's, but there the resemblance ended. American colonists repeatedly had to defend themselves against hostile natives; for a time they were confronted with a powerful European enemy; and they finally achieved their political aspirations of self-government by force. The predominantly agrarian and commercial South Australian society needed its citizen army to protect itself, not so much against hostile neighbours, because there were none, but rather against possible internal disorders and, to a lesser degree, against acts of hostility by England's enemies. Circumstances enabled the early planners to make provisions, in principle, for such a defence force. Unfortunately, the legal basis for these provisions was not explicitly stated.

On balance, and in absence of any evidence to the contrary, it might be suggested that the early English militia concept and its implementation in the American colonies served as inspiration to the planners of South Australia; the militia because it was implicit in the concept of a free citizen, the American precedent because of similar colonial conditions. In the final analysis one may be tempted to argue that the colonists in South Australia achieved, both in terms of their own resources and in terms of assistance from England, that protection which they were willing to pay for, until the time came for the problem of local defence to be regarded as a matter concerning all the Australian colonies.

The Hopes: The Adelphi Planners and  
Defence (1833-1836)

After the proposals of the National Colonisation Society had been rejected by the Colonial Office in 1831, simply because the necessary capital had not been secured, the Society was succeeded by a new organisation, the South Australian Land Company. (44) Proposals submitted by this organisation in 1832 fared little better. The charter, based on the administrative instructions issued to the superintendent of the Honduras settlement in 1775, had a number of political overtones, including the right to raise a militia, provision for self-government once the population reached 50,000, and for a locally elected governor, rather than one nominated by Royal warrant. There were other provisions, equally unpalatable to the Colonial Office. Its legal adviser, James Stephen, pointed out why proposals of this nature could not be entertained. After all, the right to raise a militia infringed Royal prerogative, while the eventual transfer of government to a popular assembly was unacceptable since '... it never had been the intention of British authorities to settle a republic' (45). In 1835, an amended version of the charter deleted references to the raising of a militia, and other contentious points, but the Colonial Office did not bother to acknowledge the submission and the Company ceased to exist (46).

Official snubs did not dampen the enthusiasm of the colonial reformers. They enjoyed growing public support after Wakefield's England and America was published in 1833. Robert Gouger, one of the most active of the colonial reformers, and a disciple of Wakefield's, set out to form a new organisation, the South Australian Association. He took rooms on Adelphi Terrace, London, and he and the members of his committee

became known as the Adelphi Planners. Their proposed scheme followed the lines adopted in the 17th century for American settlements, but the new Colony's charter was to differ in that, while belonging to the Crown, the colony was to be administered by a board of trustees, later referred to as commissioners, and that parliamentary commission was to be substituted for Royal sanction.

The proposals submitted by the Adelphi planners in December, 1833, barely mentioned the problem of defence, except that

the Trustees, as in the older colonies... [were] to have authority and were to administer regulations and laws for the maintenance of social order, making provision for defence ... (47).

When the proposals were eventually accepted, neither of the legal instruments (48) authorising the settlement of South Australia, namely the South Australia Act and Letters Patent proclaiming the Province of South Australia, specifically mentioned protection against external threats or against internal disorder, except in a general way. Article II of the Act empowered the governor to levy taxes to defray the costs of maintaining 'Peace, Order and good Government of His Majesty's Subjects', but did not say how this was to be achieved. Similarly, Article II guaranteed that no convicts were ever to be allowed into South Australia but, at the same time, failed to specify the means for enforcing this provision.

A question immediately comes to mind. If the Colonisation Society made specific provision for defence in 1831, why was the problem virtually ignored two or three years later? The answer would appear to be that the planners used political expediency in order to more readily gain acceptance of their proposals. They did not, in fact, forego the means of providing for defence, since the right to raise a force

appeared to be implicit in Article II of the Act. And since the Colony was to be administered at no expense to the British Government, that is, since the Colony was to be self-supporting, the way in which the administration, including defence arrangements, was to be carried out needed no detailed specification. It was unnecessary to insist upon the formal right to raise a defence force, and the planners may also have thought it wiser not to mention the possibility of a colonial militia operating in conjunction with the regular British troops stationed in the neighbouring colonies. Finally, since South Australia was in part modelled on the non-convict American colonies, there was no need to even intimate the question of defence because it was generally accepted that

British colonies were expected to raise their own militia and provide for their own defence as though each of them had been an England in herself (49).

Hence the undertaking quoted at the beginning of this Chapter, and hence the direction by Governor Stirling in 1829 that all male inhabitants, between the ages of 15 and 55 years, were to enrol themselves in the militia for the defence of Western Australia (50), at that time a non-convict settlement.

The Adelphi Planners had arrived at a modus operandi which did not encroach upon the prerogative of the Crown and which implicitly did not deprive the infant Colony of the power to make provision for her protection. It was not a coincidence that the planners thought this protection should be provided by a colonial militia as evidenced by the initial quotation taken from the document which formed the legal basis for bringing free citizens to the new Colony. The militia, the old constitutional force, was the form of citizen army which traditionally provided protection in a colonial society mainly composed of free settlers, particularly where these were 'to be of purer character than usually found' (51). At the same time, the lack of formal arrangements for protection did cause considerable difficulties.



1.4

The Beginning: Hindmarsh to Grey (1836-1842)

After the South Australia Act was passed in 1834, the colonisation commissioners were so preoccupied with the actual 'launching' of the Colony that the practicalities of protection seemed to have escaped their attention. Apparently they also refused to accept responsibility for measures to protect the Colony in the event of civil disorders. This was one of the reasons which prompted the first governor-elect, Colonel James Napier, to withdraw his application.

I will not attempt to govern a large body of people in a desert where they must suffer considerable inconvenience, if not hardships, without I have a force to protect what is good against which is bad. And such a force is the more necessary, whereas in Australia the supply of spiritous liquor will be abundant (52).

Colonel Napier hinted at the nature of the danger to the new Colony. It was not the threat from hostile foreigners, nor the risk of really large scale civil strife, that protection was required against. The odd native, convicts escaped from the neighbouring penal settlements, and some run-away sailors and lawless whaling crews which frequented the protected anchorages in the southern parts of the continent, constituted the real danger to the colonists.

Napier's misgivings were discounted by the Commission, which somewhat piously suggested that

a population which was to be 'one of purer character than usually found' could protect itself by forming its own militia (53).

Yet Napier's refusal, reinforced by the qualms expressed by the next governor-elect, Captain John Hindmarsh, R.N., caused the commissioners to at least enquire into the subject. They asked one of their future surveyors, Lieutenant Boyle Trevor Finnis, to draw up a plan for the protection of

the new community. Finniss suggested two schemes. One scheme proposed creating a regular police force, to consist of one officer and thirty-four non-commissioned and other ranks; the other involved declaring all males between certain ages liable for enrolment in the police force and rostering specified numbers for 24-hour periods of duty. Finniss considered that for every 1,000 acres a protective force of 15 men was required, with five men on patrol all the time. The annual cost of the two schemes would have been £2,247 and £3,000 respectively (54). Neither arrangement was seriously considered, mainly on the grounds of cost.

However, the commissioners refused Napier and Hindmarsh a body of regular troops not only on grounds of cost, but also because such a measure would have run counter to the self-supporting principle. The commissioners suggested that the 'correct' alternative would be to include in the first batch of migrants a party of discharged artillery men who, 'if properly equipped would constitute the nucleus of a militia' (55).

Even if this suggestion had been approved, it would have been impossible to organise a force to be operational from the day the colonists landed. The Colonial Office somewhat grudgingly authorized a quarter guard of Royal Marines to accompany Captain Hindmarsh to South Australia, with the proviso that they were to leave when their ship, H.M.S. Buffalo, departed from the Colony (56).

On 28th December, 1836, Captain John Hindmarsh, R.N., read out the Royal Proclamation of 19th February, 1836, and established South Australia as a British Province. The British Flag was hoisted near Glenelg and amidst gun salutes from H.M.S. Buffalo, Governor Hindmarsh took office (57). His means of maintaining law and order, and of protecting the new

settlement against whatever dangers might befall it, were to consist of two carronades and 200 rounds of ammunition (58) (59), but these were not landed from the Buffalo until early 1837. The initial beach head was protected against possible native attack, or any other threat, by the guns on board the ship. After the establishment of the governor's residence in Adelaide, the guns became militarily ineffective because they were then out of range, and too dangerous to use (60).

As a protective force, the marines were equally useless. They were a 'miserable set, being the refuse of the Marine Barracks at Portsmouth' (61). Their morale and discipline were low, because they had no officer to exercise effective control, and because they were short of provisions, the resident commissioner having refused to supply them with rations (62). From the first, at the Proclamation ceremony itself, they brought discredit to Her Majesty's service (63) by being under the influence of liquor. On another occasion, when Governor Gawler tried to apprehend runaway crew members of the Coromandel, the marines were too drunk to pursue them (64). Then there was the whaling incident. During the first half of 1837 difficulties had arisen over fishing rights at Encounter Bay between the South Australia Company and the New South Wales Whaling Company, led by a Captain Blenkinsop. The resident commissioner in Adelaide petitioned the governor, on the 10th of June, to have the said Captain Blenkinsop removed with the help of the marines. The governor advised the resident commissioner that Colonel W. Light was to 'read the Riot Act and to take any coercive measures in consequence' (65). On 14th June, the party left for Encounter Bay. During a suspected attack by natives, Colonel Light ordered the marines to stand to. The enemy turned out to be a mob of dingoes; the marines took the opportunity to rifle Light's tent and steal a dressed sheep, whereupon they were

speedily returned to Adelaide. The remainder of the party proceeded to Encounter Bay where an amicable agreement was reached with Captain Blenkinsop (66) (67).

The failure of the Imperial force to protect the young settlement could not be blamed entirely on the type of soldier and on lack of supervision. The planners had closed their eyes to the likelihood of lawlessness during the first few years of settlement and the Crown had no mandate to provide for a protective force. To the public, the marine guard was merely part of vice-regal trappings. No tears were shed when H.M.S. Alligator took the marines away on the 14th July, 1838 (68).

A set of more drunken abandoned fellows never cursed society by profligate example than the puppets of his Late Excellency; but then it was a pretty thing to have a guard of honour and their recall has shorn off part of the glories of Government House ... But to assert that the peace of the Colony will be hazarded by their departure is ridiculous (69).

With their departure, South Australia became perhaps the only infant British settlement without a military establishment. Yet the need for protection had become so obvious that the commissioners in London authorised Hindmarsh's successor, Lieutenant Colonel George Gawler, to maintain a police force, not exceeding ten officers and twenty constables (70), thereby regularising the force which Hindmarsh instituted, almost as an act of desperation, just prior to his departure in July, 1838. For the population was <sup>expanding</sup> and criminal elements were making themselves felt. The slopes of Mt. Lofty became the refuge of whalers and runaway sailors. Ex-convicts from the eastern penal colonies, originally welcomed as mentors to a society not versed in the pioneering arts, caused trouble with the natives by their cruelty (71), and at the end of a season, whaling crews celebrated in a riotous manner. Hindmarsh's police force failed to cope with its task. Its strength was low (in October, 1838, there were 17 policemen to guard 20 prisoners), its superintendent,

Henry Inman, had to be dismissed for misuse of stores (72), and finally the Resident Commissioner, John Hurtle Fisher, denied having any authority to provide necessary funds for their maintenance.

Under Gawler, the police force fared better. Within two years, its originally authorised strength had been increased to 63 and 62 in urban and country areas respectively (73). Leadership was entrusted to Major T.S. O'Halloran, late 97th Regiment of Foot, who had served in India, and had also gained considerable experience subduing civil disturbances in Yorkshire during the early thirties. Gawler himself, with his colonial experience in Canada and elsewhere, saw the maintenance of law and order as the natural province of the military. The metropolitan police in England was only in its infancy, and the police force in New South Wales was under military control. As for the South Australian police, it was a military body, its mounted force 'a dashing band of gallants, who wore a uniform similar to the 6th Dragoon Carbineers ... with silver cords ... and swords at first worn at all times ... later only on ceremonial occasions' (74). Major O'Halloran's punitive expedition to bring to justice aborigines responsible for murdering several people, ship-wrecked from the Maria on the Coorong in 1840, was seen as both a police and a military action (75), designated 'warfare' by Gawler in his instructions to O'Halloran (76).

The larger, more efficient police force duly maintained law and order, but by 1842 the cost of this protection had become the third largest item in colonial expenditure (77). However, it was not the cost that the Colonisation Commissioners objected to, but the fact that the self-supporting principle had remained untried (78). Gawler had never been convinced of its practicability, as far as protection was concerned, and had expressed the opinion that the commission's policy of rapid expansion implied

guarantee of protection (79). Yet he believed it to be his duty to prove the success of the self-supporting principle (80). To strengthen the safety of the Colony and to encourage settlers to take an active part in their own protection, he formed the Volunteer Militia.

Again Major T.S. O'Halloran took command (81). In fact most of the commissioned ranks gazetted in 1840 were police officers. Gawler obviously considered the Volunteer Militia to be a police auxiliary, an opinion shared by the public particularly in the country districts. (82).

The new force comprised six officers, two troops of cavalry organised into a squadron, and one light infantry company. In the first flush of enthusiasm, 77 all ranks enrolled (83). Every officer and man had to bear the initial expense for uniforms and arms, namely £1.10.0 for a 'fusil and bayonet complete', this amount to be refunded when the member left the corps (84). The <sup>latter</sup> / provision may account for the expenditure incurred on behalf of the force during its first year of existence, namely £117 on pay - this is quite inexplicable in the terms of enlistment - £93 on clothing, £8 on rations and £64 on contingencies. The force was styled Brigade of Volunteer Militia and had a scarlet uniform with blue facings and gold lace (85).

Gawler was no doubt aware of the contradiction in terms between volunteer and militia. Perhaps he wanted the best of both worlds. Volunteer meant no pay and no compulsion; militia implied a concession to the idea of a constitutional force and paid lip service to the ideas of the early planners. This contradiction was to bedevil South Australians throughout the nineteenth century.

What did the Volunteer Militia force do? Not much, a facetious member of the legislative council suggested in 1841, declaring that 'the standing army was a standing joke'. On one occasion, it was said, when the force was called out for exercise, the drill sergeant, with great dignity and authority, gave the order to 'form the square' - to three privates who occupied the field (86). On the Queen's birthday in April 1840, (87) the force mustered in full regalia: apart from the officers, only two non-commissioned officers and five privates (88). A similar turn out graced the opening of Port Adelaide on 14th October, 1840 (89). For a time some training was done in the early hours of the morning, before the volunteers went to work (90), but by 15th June, 1840, all training had been suspended 'as the rainy season was fast approaching' (91).

In May, 1841, approval was received for the brigade to use the title Royal, and wear a uniform without lace (92). As by that time all activity appears to have ceased the title was bestowed on a force which, to all intents and purposes, no longer existed.

Nevertheless, in June 1840 the governor was heard to say that 'Militia we must have - if it be not volunteer, it must be a legislative enactment militia. The first would be the most creditable and most useful to the province' (93). The statement presumably, foreshadowed the day of compulsory service enacted by statute. Or perhaps Gawler wanted to test public reaction to the idea of a citizen force, and having just received a shipment of arms and the promise of some ordnance wanted to appeal to the commercial instincts of the society: the Colony had a supply of arms, so let them be used.

Gawler's idea failed to find support. There was a wave of prosperity due to heavy fiscal spending and the public obviously sought to preserve this situation rather than reduce fiscal expenditure by implementing a scheme of public protection from which no-one made a profit. The press, if not openly hostile (94), ridiculed the idea. The Southern Australian was particularly derisive.

We have no small pleasure in perceiving that, in his Excellency's judgment, the colonists are now arrived at a point in which they have sufficient leisure and ease of circumstances to unite in a scheme of public pastime. Of course, the proposed militia must be for recreation of the province as we do not know of any purpose for which it can be set on foot. Perhaps we shall yet live to realise the age of tournaments in South Australia (95).

An engineer named Nixon published a number of very anti-militaristic cartoons (96). The question also occupied poets and satirists. Ballads like 'Adelaide Tambourgi', 'Soliloquy' and 'One more Melody' were published (97). An 'Answer to Adelaide Tambourgi' approved plenty of artillery because artillery fire produced rain, and recommended that a corps for young children should be established, for 'by establishing the corps ... we should establish a growing body of infantry ... while the Seniors were meeting at the Brigade Office near King William Street, the Juniors might meet at the toy shop next door' (98). It was even suggested that

The destinies of the World are influenced by us. Will the French dare ... to attempt the civilisation of New Zealand when they hear of so formidable a force within so short a distance of that country? Will not Russia be arrested in the midst of her ambitious career? Will not the Canadian revolt melt into thin air as beneath the wand of the enchanter? (99)

The original volunteer force was still slightly ridiculed forty years later. In the 'Recollections of a Septuagenarian' we read: '... The officers did good service at the ... Queen's birthday ... We had then begun to practice the genteel



and even to initiate the ceremonious' (100).

Despite the irony, there were genuine under-tones of uneasiness regarding the safety of the Colony in the event of hostile action by non-British powers. Several suggestions were put forward. As early as 1838 attempts were made to form the Adelaide Rifle Company, in actual fact a rifle club, whose promoters were possibly more interested in target practice as a sport than in making their members proficient marksmen for the purpose of defence (101). It was proposed to augment the volunteer militia by complete enrolment of all government employees (102). It was also suggested that the local whaling industry should be protected by a man of war, while the volunteer militia protected the population against the crews of American and French whalers (103). The latter may have been merely an expression of commercial jealousy. In the absence of any actual threats, all these suggestions fell on to deaf ears.

Why did Gawler's ideas, ostensibly designed to implement the self-supporting principle in the field of defence, fail to materialise? Sceptical and satirical press comments merely expressed the dissenters' aversion to military ceremonial. The population may have felt that military service would claim too much of its time and thus impede material progress. The most likely explanation of the colonists' indifference to Gawler's volunteer militia lay in the indefinite nature of the force, its almost unconstitutional existence and failure both to define and to appreciate its basic aims.

In the absence of external threats it was difficult, at the time, to see any justification for a military force, whatever its character. Gawler's police force had considerably reduced the convict menace and the danger to property from

natives (104). The crime rate decreased, though perhaps mainly due to general shortage of money in the Colony, and the police Commissioner's quarterly report of 30th September, 1841, showed that public houses and sly-grog shops were very short of business, and 'even brothels became quieter, their most frequent patrons being the overlanders, both gentle and simple' (105). The colonists failed to realise that Gawler faced increasing criticism over the expenditure he had incurred in order to protect them, and that his volunteer militia was a practical step towards reducing this expenditure, rather than an attempt to implement any lofty ideas of self-support.

The necessity for drastic economies was forced on Gawler shortly before his departure in 1841, when drafts necessary to meet his expenses were dishonoured and as a result, a parliamentary enquiry, the Select Committee on South Australia, got under way in London. The Committee recommended measures to overcome these financial difficulties and in June, 1842, Lord Edward Stanley brought down a bill 'for the better government of South Australia'. The existing governing body was to be abolished. Authority was to be vested in the governor, and a legislative council appointed by the Crown (106). In return, the British Parliament would underwrite the financial affairs of the Colony, which was henceforth to live within its means under its newly appointed governor.

Captain George Grey became the Colony's third governor on 14th May, 1841. He was educated at Sandhurst and <sup>had</sup> entered the army in 1830, as an ensign in the 83rd Regiment. After some exploring activities in Western Australia, he served as resident magistrate at King George Sound (107). At twenty-seven, he was the youngest governor the Colony has ever had.

Grey and Gawler were opposites. A contemporary suggested that Gawler's experience in the Peninsular War led him to disregard questions of expenditure when large operations were to be undertaken, while Grey's experience in organisation and attention to detail, acquired at Sandhurst and in Western Australia, may have inclined him towards small-mindedness (108). His approach to problems was generally pragmatic. No visionary, he applied himself to tasks which required immediate solution, or were likely to show immediate results. He considered that, in a young colony, people could not spare the time to undertake their own protection (109). Thus he had little confidence in the South Australian volunteers and certainly did not intend to incur any expenditure on their behalf, nor to interest himself in their training. When Grey was asked to send volunteers against marauding aborigines as an alternative to police protection, which was unavailable at that time, he was not prepared to implement the self-supporting principle and regarded the request as unconstitutional. Unless such volunteers were

... acting as special constables enrolled by direction of a magistrate as prescribed by Statutes 1 and 2, William IV, c. 41, they would not be permitted to constitute themselves into a military force proceeding against an enemy, because the natives were Her Majesty's subjects (110)

Grey felt that people, who clamoured to use volunteers in what was essentially a police matter, were merely taking the law into their own hands.

It was not only a practical governor who at the time doubted the wisdom, or at least the practicability, of the self-supporting principle. The British Government was itself reluctant to leave the maintenance of law and order in the hands of a Colony which had just proved that it could not support itself financially, that it was hardly 'one of purer character than

usually found' and which could only be protected by a large police force or by the presence of Imperial troops.

Consequently, prior to his departure from England, Grey was instructed by the Colonial Secretary to request the New South Wales command to dispatch two or three companies of Imperial infantry to the new Colony (111).

On Earl Russell's instructions a detachment of the 96th Regiment of Foot (Manchester), commanded by Captain G.V. Butler and consisting of three officers, five non-commissioned officers and 74 other ranks, arrived on the ship Endora from Van Diemen's Land on 16th October, 1841 (112). The arrival of the troops ushered in an era during which Torrens' self-supporting principle as applied to defence (113) was held in abeyance, to be invoked again under the threat of war fourteen years later. In the meantime, South Australians were entirely dependent on the protection offered by the Imperial legions.

CHAPTER IITHE ERA OF IMPERIAL PROTECTION 1841-1870

The presence of an Imperial military force in your Australian colonies has supplied a visible and substantial emblem of Imperial Power.

Governor Fergusson, 1870 (1)

Our second Colonial policy was to govern and defend the Colonies from home.

Earl Grey, 1853 (2)

The men of the 96th Regiment have nothing earthly to do ...

Major T.S. O'Halloran, 1842 (3)

### The Imperial Legions - Their Role

The advent of Imperial troops in South Australia ended an era of self-protection and ushered in a period of complete reliance on Great Britain. In colonies like South Australia, which was free from external threat, the British garrisons had a threefold role to play. They were required to undertake guard and police duties. Periodically, they were to act as training cadres for the emerging colonial military forces. And, in their constitutional role, their presence upheld the authority of the governor.

South Australians accepted the garrison of red-coated soldier-policemen as both an economical and a convenient arrangement. In 1850, for example, the cost of one Imperial soldier was £47 per annum, compared with £88 required to maintain a civil service policeman.\* On the other hand, the idea of self-support with respect to protection seems to have lost its appeal early in the Colony's history. Perhaps the task of enforcing law and order was unpalatable, particularly in the rural areas. Here 'self-help did not extend beyond the farm boundaries' (4), and Governor Young's suggestion for a voluntary constabulary was received most unfavourably (5).

The police role of the Imperial troops in South Australia had a chequered history, in which successes were few. Early in 1842 Governor Sir George Grey dispatched to Port Lincoln a detachment under Lieutenant Hugonin, with orders to capture natives responsible for the murder of three white people. The pursuers wore pipe-clay trousers, heavy tunics and all the accoutrements, including a pack, with a great-coat rolled over the top of it, blanket, camp kettle, haversack, ammunition pouches with 60 - 80 rounds, water canteen and musket and bayonet:

\* Vide Appendix B1

some 64 lbs in all (6). 'The load our men bore in those days, placed upon their backs, was such that the free motion of the body was impeded ...' (7) In addition, the belts and breast straps crossed in front of the chest, effectively constricting the lungs. Needless to say, the forces of justice were no match for unencumbered quick-footed natives (8).

Excursions like the above were discouraged. The governor issued instructions that the military was to be called out to support the civilian power only in cases of extreme urgency, and only on the written instruction of a magistrate, who then had to accompany the detachment in the execution of its duty. The governor insisted on seeing a copy of any such instruction, and required his resident to submit periodic reports regarding strength, conduct and nature of employment of the detachment. (9). On two occasions Governor Grey was obliged to issue sharp reminders (10). Under this arrangement, a detachment (one non-commissioned officer and twelve other ranks) was sent, more or less permanently, to Moorundi on the River Murray, to help the resident magistrate, Edward John Eyre, to resolve problems with local natives.

Permanent military installations in rural areas had been disallowed by the Secretary of State for the colonies (11). The primary duty of the military force was to guard the gaol, and in order to do so, the Moorundi detachment was withdrawn in 1844. Prior to this, in direct opposition to instructions from the Secretary of State, Governor Grey had, inexplicably, tried to establish the Port Lincoln detachment permanently. He requested reinforcements of twenty to thirty men from Sydney (12). In practice, even with two detachments away from Adelaide, Captain Butler found it difficult to keep the remaining 40 or so men

gainfully employed and even obtained government approval to hire his soldiers out as field hands during the 1842 harvest (13). Occasionally they shifted furniture between government offices (14).

Ten years later the situation had changed. Now there were genuinely not enough troops in the Colony to carry out the tasks assigned to them. The gold discoveries in Victoria in the early fifties caused the same exodus of labour from South Australia as that experienced elsewhere. During this period the troops were used to an ever-increasing extent on protection duties, previously carried out by non-military personnel.

Thus Captain, later Brevet Major E. Moore, Butler's successor, was asked to provide a guard for the stockade at Cox Creek, 12 miles from Adelaide, as well as for the gaol. Governor Young, in fact, expected the army to provide guards wherever prison inmates were employed on road building and similar work. He realised that the detachment was numerically insufficient to undertake all the guard duties required of it and suggested that it should be increased to a full company. Young's request was denied (15). Military headquarters in Sydney objected quite strongly to the use of Imperial troops as gaol guards, but consented to leave them on protection duties until the colonial government was able to supply its own civilian guard force (16). The military guard was finally withdrawn from the Adelaide gaol in January, 1853 (17).

The gold shipments to Adelaide presented a different story; there was no question of withdrawing the military guard from the treasury where quantities of gold were stored (18). After the discovery of gold in 1852 at Echunga, 23 miles from Adelaide, the government considered employing the military for guard duties there. A small detachment was to be organised:



one officer and fifteen other ranks, the officer to be appointed a justice of the peace, and the other ranks to be sworn in as special constables. The terms of reference for this detachment were to be similar to those which earlier applied at Port Lincoln, that is, the detachment was to act only when authorised to do so by the local magistrate. The troops were to receive an allowance, in addition to their normal pay, and provisions were even made for medical care in the field (19). However, had the detachment ever gone to Echunga, the special constables would have been dispersed over a wide area, leaving the gold in the commissioner's tent virtually unguarded (20).

In 1857, a situation occurred which nearly led to a more warlike employment of Imperial troops. The people of Robe became alarmed by the large number of Chinese, en route to the Victorian goldfields. In May, 1857, four shiploads of them brought the number of Chinese encamped in and around Robe to about 3,000, compared with approximately 100 able-bodied white men in the town.

Many of the inhabitants getting very apprehensive about their safety in case of any outbreak among the Celestials who have lately waxed somewhat indignant about the impositions practised upon them by the land sharks here. There is no doubt, in case of some quarrel arising and ending in what it probably would do - a scrimmage ... A small party of soldiers under an officer should be sent to Robe where they would be more usefully employed than they are in Adelaide (21).

Moore's successor, Major L.S.K. Nelson was instructed to prepare a subalterns' party which, on the 10th June, 1857, duly embarked on the government schooner Yatala, headed for Guichen Bay, where the troops remained for about twelve months. However, the opportunity to add the Celestials to their battle honours did not present itself (22).

Such were the duties which Imperial troops in South Australia became more and more reluctant to perform. The Horse Guards stipulated that the Queen's troops would furnish a guard to <sup>the</sup> governor in residence, but as an honour to a person, but not protect buildings, which was a police duty. The governor could require Imperial troops to perform such duties as were within Queen's Regulations, but was obliged to explain the reason to their commanding officer (23). In addition, 'it was the practice of the troops to render their assistance in all cases of fire' (24). The military command reluctantly permitted the provision of prison guards at Dry Creek, and protection of the powder magazines north of Adelaide (25), although this strained military resources to such an extent that guard duties were neglected (26). From 1862 onwards the employment of troops on police duties ceased altogether (27).

The Colonial Office envisaged that Imperial troops would play a part in the training of colonial volunteers. If the senior Imperial officer was below field rank, a ruling enabled him to receive such brevet rank as would make him the senior ranking officer, in the event of Imperial and colonial troops acting together. He was also required to present the War Office with annual reports on matters concerning the volunteers, including attendance (28). The War Office had no wish to find itself burdened with unforeseen expenditure if, in an emergency, colonial defences proved inadequate (29). But neither the ranking Imperial officer, who held nominal overall command (30) (31), nor his troops, appear to have participated to any extent in the training of local forces, although there were occasions when local volunteers were requested to instruct the regulars in artillery drill (32). Actually, the colonial

authorities actively discouraged Imperial involvement in the training and administration of the force, possibly due to pressure from the volunteers themselves. For instance, when Major Nelson, in 1859, raised the ever present problem of enforcing discipline among the volunteers, he was told by Governor MacDonnell that

it was the policy of the Government to encourage the ... rifle companies by rendering duties and discipline as little irksome as was consistent with proper Government supervision ... and not to make compulsory regulations [regarding discipline] ... but to recommend them to the companies (33).

In later years the South Australian government objected even to the inspection of stores. Colonel P.E. Warburton, at the time commissioner of police and colonel-commandant of South Australia, stated the reason for this attitude: the inspections were for imperial purposes only, and the reports, if misinterpreted, might be unjustly unfavourable to the South Australian volunteers (34). When, in 1863, the Imperial troops left for New Zealand, co-operation with colonial troops effectively ceased, except on a few ceremonial occasions.

Although Imperial troops in South Australia did not prove very effective, either in a police or a military role, their presence was accepted. But was it understood that they were also stationed in the Colony for the purpose of supporting the governor in his task of implementing British colonial policy? That this was in fact their constitutional role?

In this respect the British garrisons in New South Wales, for instance, faced no special problem. The senior military officer was appointed a member of the executive and legislative councils (35), ranked next to the governor in the executive council and was, in fact, the lieutenant-governor designate (36). No such arrangement existed in South Australia, not

even after the colony was taken over by the Crown (37), nor did it appear necessary. Here the military was not as important for the maintenance of internal order as was the case in New South Wales. Besides, since 1842, the senior judge had held a dormant commission as lieutenant-governor designate of South Australia. Consequently, the senior military officer was not expected to play a political role in the Colony and was placed fifteenth on the precedence list, after the members of the legislative council (38).

Governors Grey and Robe were supported by a legislative council composed not only of men of property, but of men with naval or military backgrounds similar to their own. Pike calls their choice of councillors, extraordinary (39), but it was in no way different from the pattern that had developed elsewhere. The men most trusted by the early governors were service officers, whom they considered to be 'superior settlers' (40), and if they owned substantial property, all the better. Major T.S. O'Halloran and Captain C.H. Bagot both had good military records and owned valuable properties to the south and east of Adelaide. Captain G.F. Dashwood was an ex-naval officer, also with 'a profitable country property' (41). The only concession to the merchant community was one Jacob Hagen, but his appointment was due to connections in London (42).

It was a conservative rule, in line with established colonial traditions. Government was exercised very much as the Colonial Office in London would have wanted it. The troops were there as the outward emblem of this rule, but there was no need for the governor to elevate the military, formally, to a position of constitutional significance, nor to have the senior military officer designated lieutenant-governor, particularly

since the senior justice was eminently suitable for the task. In this fashion, up to the fifties, that is up to the granting of self-government, the governors of South Australia had their cake and ate it too. They exercised absolute authority, backed by the military when the need arose, but as a meaningful concession to the liberal elements in the community they avoided the outward appearance of a military establishment. On the other hand, the military command on the Australia station must have anticipated the possibility of the military acting in a constitutional role because, as early as 1841, military headquarters in Sydney claimed for Captain Butler the right of precedence as the senior military officer on the post. The request was rejected by Governor Grey because the senior military officer was not a member of the legislative council and hence the provisions of the 'Rules for the Administration of Colonies' applied (43).

However, in the early fifties it became apparent that Sir Charles Cooper would be succeeded by Mr. Justice Boothby, a man, not only very unpopular (44) in the Colony, but also considered highly 'unsuitable' by the Duke of Newcastle (45). Consequently, an alternative had to be devised. The Duke of Newcastle had advised Sir Richard G. MacDonnell that he wanted the War Office to issue a dormant commission to the major-general commanding Imperial troops in Australia, but this proposition proved impracticable because Adelaide was too far from Sydney and the small garrison did not warrant the transfer of general head quarters from Sydney to Adelaide. The Chief-secretary could not be considered for the lieutenant-governorship because he was subject to party politics, and thus the only alternative was to appoint 'a gentleman of some

standing' or the senior military officer\* (46). Here the matter rested until March, 1860, when it became apparent that the senior military officer in South Australia did, in fact, hold a dormant commission to act as the governor's deputy, whether a proclamation to that effect had been issued or not (47).

Later that year, the constitutional role of the military was hinted at in public. F.S. Dutton, a member of the legislature, asked why the Imperial troops could not be spared for active service, since in Melbourne volunteers had taken over the various guard duties. Dutton thought it 'strange that ... [in South Australia] a large body of men should be kept ... in a state of glorious idleness'. The answer can be found in the tabled correspondence between the governor and Major-General Pratt, senior British military officer in Australia. '... There are strong reasons against removing the few officers and men now left in South Australia ...' (48). In other words, Governor Macdonnell was not prepared to lose his military lieutenant-governor designate, and since a senior military officer had to be in command of at least a token military force, the troops had to be retained. It was not till after the troops' departure for New Zealand in 1863, that their constitutional role was explained to the public, namely that the Imperial Government had made arrangements whereby the general officer commanding the Australian station had the power to dispatch a suitable officer to any of the colonies where an emergency required the presence of an acting governor. In other words, all acting governors in Australian colonies were

\* The senior military officer in South Australia from 1852 held field rank, irrespective of the size of detachment under his command, and was thus eligible to act as lieutenant-governor.

considered to be military appointments. As long as Sir Charles Cooper was in the Colony

his presence provided for such a contingency because he held one of those dormant commissions which the Duke of Newcastle finds it so difficult to confer upon persons in the Colonies - persons of sufficient social position and, at the time, free from political bias (49).

Governor Daly lost no time in requesting restoration of the military to South Australia because his commission provided for the senior military officer to act in case of the governor's absence or death. The Imperial troops returned in November, 1865. They were not called upon to fulfil their constitutional role until two years later when Sir Dominic Daly died, on 19th February, 1868, and Lieutenant-Colonel S. Hamley, 50th Regiment of Foot (Queen's Own Royal East Kent), took over the reins of government (50). There was only one other occasion when the senior military officer acted as lieutenant-governor. In 1870 Sir James Fergusson visited Victoria and the colony was administered by Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Roche, 2/18 Regiment of Foot (Royal Irish) (51). When the Imperial troops were finally about to be withdrawn - they left for Melbourne on the Aldinga on 17th August, 1870 (52) - the Colonial Office sent a provisional warrant for the chief-justice to administer the government in the absence of the governor. The warrant was put into effect in July 1870 with the designation of Chief-Justice, Sir Samuel James Way (53).

It is difficult to extract much of historical significance from the presence of Imperial troops\* in South Australia. As far as the development of the Colony was

\* In addition to the line regiments, listed chronologically in Appendix B, there was another body of Imperial troops in South Australia, a detachment of Sappers and Miners. Their story is not germane to this work. However, since they were of considerable economic significance to the colony, their history is related in Appendix C.

concerned, their value in a police role was marginal, and as a training cadre for the budding volunteer forces the Imperial troops were ineffectual. However, unless successive governors and administrators did consider the constitutional role of the Imperial troops to be important, there could be no explanation for the almost frantic efforts of men like Sir Richard G. MacDonnell and Sir Dominic Daly to either retain a detachment or to have the Imperial garrison re-instated at all costs.

The colonists, on the other hand, saw no virtue in the presence of Imperial troops in their midst. There was so much about the general administration and social character of the British regulars to irritate South Australians intensely that British garrisons met with indifference, if not outright rejection, in the 'Paradise of Dissent'.



The Imperial Legions - Their Place in the  
Colonial Society

Three factors influenced the attitude of South Australians to Imperial troops: the question of control, financial arrangements for maintaining the military contingents, and the relationship between the garrison and colonial society.

Difficulties over administrative control arose in 1841, when Captain R.V. Butler, officer commanding the Imperial troops, was instructed by his Hobart headquarters to refuse the governor's request that the Sappers and Miners, and the Chelsea pensioners, be paid from the military chest\* (54). Butler's refusal carried four implications. If the troops were merely attached to the South Australian government, then their own head-quarters were totally responsible for their upkeep and therefore entitled to exercise full administrative and operational control. Hence, any demands on the garrison's services would have to be made through the proper chain of command. If the troops were seconded, then the foregoing matters were the governor's concern. If, on the other hand, Butler's military chest was to be considered a unit paying account only, then it would have been wrong to regard it in the same light as a commissariat chest\*, and it would have been improper to make payments for which the British Government was committed in terms of Imperial military obligations incurred outside the Colony. Finally, the question of the barracks rent raised the problem of financial contribution on the part of the Colony and foreshadowed British colonial military disengagement, which had already begun to a small degree.

\* The military chest, as distinct from the commissariat chest was a unit paying account, mainly concerned with paying the soldiers, a distinction Grey conveniently chose to ignore.

As far as Grey was concerned, the governor was in control of the Colony and recognised the local senior military officer as the one to whom, from time to time, he would issue 'such orders for military service as were required by the welfare and safety of the colony'. Since Sappers and Miners had originally been paid from funds provided by the colonisation commissioners, and since there was no alternative arrangement for the sustenance of this detachment when colonial funds were no longer available, as was the case in 1843, the British Government found itself obliged to support its own soldiers. In the absence of a commissariat chest, the military chest was the proper source. By proper Grey meant the cheapest source. The governor obtained ready cash by means of bills drawn on the Treasury, discounted locally at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Payments from a commissariat chest were made under the same conditions. In other words, the British taxpayer lost £3.10.0 for every £100 expended in the Colony. Payments made through the military chest were not subject to this discount, and consequently the governor felt that the military chest should, for the time being, stand the cost of the barracks rent, despite the fact that the colonial government had guaranteed this expenditure. The chest should also pay the Chelsea and other pensions, an expenditure which could, in no way, be considered a charge on the colonial government, and which the colonial government was not equipped to administer.

The Governor Grey had made his point. Henceforth the governor issued orders to a force seconded to South Australia to support the vice-regal administration. In purely operational (military) matters, the governor was content to let the senior military officer take his directions from the regimental commanding officer in Hobart, and later in Sydney or Melbourne.

For instance, governors did not interfere in matters of troop movements. On the other hand, in day-to-day affairs the military was strictly under the control of the governor and the senior officer had to turn to the governor for any concessions he deemed necessary for the welfare of his troops. The government was usually quite co-operative, particularly where small and non-recurring expenditure was concerned. The provision of bed ticking for repatriated service personnel during the voyage home was a case in point (55). With the establishment of a proper commissariat in South Australia the administrative difficulties of meeting Imperial financial commitments were largely overcome. The commissariat was quite separate from the army and was answerable to the Lords of the Treasury. In theory, troops in the colonies were in the same position as if they were occupying a foreign country for, and at the expense of, Great Britain (56). Since such an occupation was of a permanent nature, the commissariat cadre was also permanent, and was responsible for paying, feeding, clothing, equipping and quartering the troops, as well as being charged with the distribution of half-pay and military (Chelsea) pensions. The required funds were authorised by the general officer commanding (not by the senior military officer on the spot) or by the governor, and raised locally in the form of a general military paying account cum petty cash reserve fund, against bills drawn on the Treasury. Colonial contributions were paid into the commissariat chest, actual payments being made by the deputy assistant commissary general.

When the Imperial troops were withdrawn in 1870, the South Australian Government undertook to disburse military payments, on a 3 per cent commission basis, to some 300 Imperial pensioners in the Colony (57).

The administrative arrangements for maintaining the garrison were quite complicated, even without the implications which arose when Great Britain actively began transferring her colonial military expenditure to the colonies. In or about 1847, concern was felt in England that the dispersion of British military power actually weakened the defences of England herself. The Duke of Wellington stated in 1847, that England could be invaded within a week of the outbreak of war (58). To these strategic considerations were added factors of a more political nature. This was the beginning of the free trade era, the era of the Little Englanders, with their anti-colonial attitudes and their desire for minimum government expenditure in any field. The colonies swallowed up one-third of England's military budget and, as a result of mounting public opinion, a Select Parliamentary Committee had been appointed in 1834 'to enquire into the Military Establishments and Expenditure in the Colonies and dependencies of the Crown' (59).

The enquiry apparently affected financial arrangement between the South Australian government and the Imperial troops. Whereas in New South Wales, and elsewhere for that matter, Imperial troops were totally maintained by Great Britain, from about 1844 or so onwards, South Australia paid almost all the money required to keep the troops in the Colony. It is evident from the Blue Books<sup>\*</sup>, the forerunners of the South Australian Statistical Registers, that until 1851 or 1852 the Colony paid all regimental expenses with the exception<sup>of</sup> colonial pay, an additional living allowance. From then on, the South Australian Government became responsible for all Imperial military expenditure, exclusive of commissariat items concerned with half-pay and

\* Vide Appendix B

pensions (60). If the Colony was to find itself in financial difficulties, the commissariat chest was obliged to advance the necessary funds (61).

Some of the items caused friction between the military and the colonial government. The major bone of contention was colonial pay, which, in colonies where garrisons were maintained for Imperial purposes, had to be borne by the British taxpayer. The consequent cost to the British taxpayer was quite appreciable (62) and the Colonial Office endeavoured to have colonial pay rates reduced overall. The move was initiated by the War Office in or about 1860 in an effort to standardise service conditions throughout the Empire. Sir Edward Lugard suggested to Major-General Sir S. Pratt, General Officer Commanding in Australia, that the reduction should be  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the 1861 rate for officers, with the lodging allowance to be the same as the one New South Wales had prior to the discovery of gold, plus 25 per cent. Other ranks' rate was to be reduced by one-half, but augmented by a weekly grocery ration consisting of :  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. bread,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. salt,  $\frac{1}{3}$  oz. pepper, 2 ozs. sugar,  $\frac{1}{6}$ th oz. tea and  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd oz. coffee.

In South Australia, these reductions had been anticipated by Major Moore about eight years earlier. During the fifties he constantly endeavoured, and partly succeeded in increasing the extra-regimental emoluments (63) so that, when the War Office enforced reductions, the result was not as drastic as it might have been. At first the South Australian Government was not prepared to match the rates approved for New South Wales and Victoria (63), since in the early fifties the Colony was experiencing an appreciable loss of revenue and was financially unable to meet such demands. Finnis, the Colonial Secretary, suggested that the troops could hire themselves out as labourers at the prevailing high wage rates, thereby

benefiting both themselves and the economy (63 ). This, the military did not approve. Major Moore pointed out that for troops to hire themselves as labourers was not 'in accordance with the custom of the service and weakens discipline', and that New South Wales and Victoria, while experiencing the same labour shortage, had granted the allowances (64). Despite initial unwillingness, the South Australian Government did eventually begin to increase colonial pay (65) and even agreed to pay, from colonial funds, a lodging allowance for military personnel living out of barracks. In 1852 this amounted to an annual sum of £75 and £55, for captains and subalterns respectively.

The British authorities were successful in their endeavour to halt the colonial pay and lodging allowance spiral\*, and from 1860 onwards the rates were reduced appreciably (66). The general officer commanding, not unnaturally, would have preferred to have the old rates restored and suggested that perhaps a board might be convened in South Australia to enquire into the question of allowances. After all, they were paid by the colonies. But Sir Richard MacDonnell, governor at the time, insisted that '... we should not mix ourselves up in this military business ... allowances are their affair ...' (67).

The South Australian Government on the other hand adopted a different attitude. Perhaps it resented Imperial interference in the matter of money paid, after all, by the Colony itself. Perhaps South Australians felt that the reductions were unfair. Whatever the reason, the South Australian Government requested a delay in implementing measures which were considered as an ungracious act on the part of Great Britain. Not that South Australians were actually prepared to have the

\* Vide Appendix D

old rates restored, after all, 'the Duke of Newcastle's dispatch was imperative' (68).

The living conditions of the troops were quite different from those of the remainder of the population, for they were 'a class of men set apart from the general mass of the community ...', and this in turn caused difficulty in their relations with the colonial society. Besides this, the officers, and the non-commissioned officers and privates, also lived in worlds apart.

The officers were men drawn from the English middle classes, relatively poor people, for whom well-meaning relatives had purchased a commission to set them up in life. Holding a commission in the guards was a social distinction; a commission in a line regiment was a means of eking out a meagre living. How meagre it was can be seen from Fortescue's tabulation of net emoluments\* which for a lieutenant colonel came to £114 per annum, while for a major, captain, lieutenant and ensign the amounts were £108, £94, £85 and £73 respectively (69). This was in the middle fifties, when a labourer at Port Adelaide received 10/- for a nine hour working day (70). The officer's financial plight was accentuated when he was married. 'The officer's wife sat at home with a grilled mackerel while the husband was forced to drink champagne on guest night', and the children were brought up in an atmosphere of fictitious social prestige and affluence (71).

The officers' accommodation was often equally as bad as that provided for the other ranks. According to Sir Henry

\* In the middle of the 19th century, a lieutenant-colonel of the a line was faced with a number of fixed annual expenses: interest on the commission price (5 per cent), regimental expenses (£20) and income tax (£11).

Hardinge, the officers in Australia 'lived in a state of wretchedness' (69). Hence the colonial arrangements for a lodging allowance, which made life a little easier for them. Provided that the officer lived long enough, he could sell his commission, sometimes with a small profit. If he died on service, the commission was forfeited. In other words, his estate did not include the original capital outlay and his next-of-kin did not benefit from the investment. Yet the system which, by and large, appears to have been quite iniquitous, had its defenders. The Duke of Wellington said, 'It is promotion by purchase which brings into the service ... men who have some connection with the interests and fortunes of the country ...', a view shared by a recent writer, the author of 'The Reason Why' (72).

There is no evidence to suppose that Imperial officers in South Australia were held in the same ill repute as those stationed in New South Wales, particularly during the early period. There is no parallel to, say, Governor Macquarie's complaints about licentiousness in the officer corps (73). Possibly this was due to the small number of officers stationed in South Australia at any one time; possibly also, to the firm stand taken by the early governors on questions of social etiquette. There was the matter of precedence, which put Imperial officers well down the social scale (74). A piquant picture also emerged on the question of church services. The Reverend Charles Beaumont Howard of Holy Trinity Church claimed, in 1849, special fees for attending to the spiritual needs of the military. The Governor, Sir Henry Young, denied the request and, at the same time, refused to allow special pews to be set aside for the officers. Putting both parties in their place,



the governor offered to authorise special church services to be arranged in the barracks or elsewhere (75).

The duties of the serving officer were scarcely arduous. Unless he was the duty officer, he had nothing to do, because training was delegated to non-commissioned officers who, more often than not, had nothing but scorn for the 'epaulette gentry and their vanity'. Their enforced leisure enabled the officers to acquire considerable colonial competence, which was later to fit them for colonial administrative positions. Such was the case of Captain G.V. Butler, who sold his commission and acted for a time as private secretary to Governor Grey. In 1847 he became the resident at Guichen Bay and in 1851, immigration agent for South Australia in London.

The other ranks lived in their own world. 'Officers' wives eat puddin' and pies, sergeants wives have scally' was a doggerel verse epitomising their conditions (76). A soldier's lot was a miserable one, even in South Australia, for the 'community socially based on right and truth' does not appear to have had any beneficial influence on the line soldiers stationed there. There was much evidence of brawling, desertion and all the other evils, regarded as normal in garrison life at the time. This regrettable situation resulted from the way the soldiers were recruited, their terms of service, their pay and conditions, and their perennial state of idleness (77). The recruit was induced into the service by a sum of money, a bounty, which varied in accordance with the period of enlistment. The recruiter himself received 15/- bringing money and was not likely to be particular whom he introduced into the service, while the bounty was, in practice, treated as a kit allowance which was eventually deducted from the recruit's own pay. From 1847, all

soldiers enlisted for a limited period only. The infantry enlisted for 10 years, with the possibility of re-engaging for a period not exceeding 11 years. On a foreign station, the Commanding officer was empowered to hold a soldier for two years over and above the enlistment term. A soldier could be discharged earlier if he had earned the requisite good conduct awards, but this discharge had to be purchased at rates commensurate with the length of the unexpired portion of the enlistment term. If he was prepared to settle in the colonies, he could be discharged, subject to two good conduct badges, with even a small gratuity. For example, Private J. McGuire of the 4th Hussars, was discharged from Simla, India, in 1872 on condition that he settled in South Australia (78).

The Crown was responsible for the soldiers' pay of 1/- per day, plus the beer money of 1d or 2d. Although his clothing, accommodation and food were supplied, a token amount was deducted regularly, referred to as the Imperial stoppage. This accounted for £18.10.2 of a soldier's yearly income of £19.15.5, leaving a net balance of £1.5.3. A soldier's wife was entitled to half the male ration expenditure, exclusive of the liquor allowance, a child between seven and fourteen years of age received one third, and a child below seven years of age one quarter (79).

Barracks accommodation was generally very bad. 300 cubic feet of air per man was considered sufficient. There were normally no ablution blocks or conveniences, let alone recreation rooms. Understandably, the health of the troops suffered. Up to 1865, the rate of hospitalisation 'for diseases contracted by youth, ignorance and bad conduct' was about 740 per 1,000, with an average mortality rate of 9.13 per 1,000. At times the mortality rate on the Australian station was higher than anywhere else, except in the West Indies. Respiratory and venereal

diseases were the chief causes. Statistics, compiled in 1866 from a number of military stations throughout the Empire, showed that the Australian station had the second highest mortality rate of all stations, and that the Australian mortality rate in every age group exceeded the Empire average for the same age groups (80). In September 1863, when the South Australian detachment of the 40th Regiment of Foot was due to sail for New Zealand, one third of the men was unfit for duty due to respiratory illnesses (81).

The story of the barracks in Adelaide does not concern us here\*, but it reflects the South Australian Government's attitude that, although the troops were in the Colony on the insistence of the British Government, they were/nevertheless treated as uninvited guests. No effort was made to ameliorate their lot until South Australians themselves became anxious that the troops should stay.

The accommodation problem was aggravated by the fact that barracks had to be shared by the women and children of the soldiery. There was an instance in South Australia in 1848, of thirteen families being packed into four dilapidated cottages on North Terrace (82). Service regulations stipulated that no more than three out of every four staff sergeants, and five out of every 60 privates, were allowed to marry, with the overall rate not exceeding 8 per cent of the strength of a regiment (or company, battery, squadron, or detachment concerned\*\*.) Permission to marry depended on two good conduct badges, seven years' service and savings of £5. When a soldier married without regimental permission, his dependants were regimentally not recognised (83). This resulted in the destitute position of quite a few army wives in South Australia.

The problem of deserted wives first made itself felt in the

\* Vide Appendix F    \*\* The two companies of the 2/14 Regiment, which arrived in Adelaide from New Zealand in 1868, were accompanied by seven regimental wives and twenty-nine children (84).

Colony in 1863. Soldiers who had married without their senior officer's consent could not take their wives with them if, indeed, they genuinely wished to do so. When, in 1863, the detachment of the 40th Regiment was ordered to New Zealand, the South Australian Government was requested to grant a gratuity to all ranks in the form of six months' colonial pay, plus free rations and quarters, in support of their dependants, just as Victoria and New South Wales had done. At that time some 15 mothers and 21 children were not entitled to regimental maintenance. At first the South Australian Government rejected the request (84), but eventually agreed to provide rations and quarters to three wives and nine children (85). One Mr. Verco, a member of the legislature, 'objected to the introduction of soldiers to be kept here for three or four years in idleness and then removed, leaving a number of destitute women and children behind' (86). The plight of these unfortunate people was held to be a strong argument against having any more than the authorised number of troops in South Australia, since two companies would leave behind twice the number of destitutes for which the community would have to care. A Soldiers' Wives' Relief Committee was formed and supported quite well despite the fact that some people actually believed the soldiers' wives to be better off now, than 'when their husbands were here to drink their earnings' (87).

After the withdrawal of troops in 1870, the South Australian Government tried to take official action on behalf of the destitute wives left behind. It requested the War Office to stop six soldiers 3d. per day in respect of deserted wives, in accordance with Article of War No. 177, appended to the Mutiny Act of 1870. The War Office took a mere four months to reach a decision. A few enquiries were made, and finally only one of the six destitute wives obtained some

relief (88).

Idleness was another crucial social problem, for it resulted in drunkenness, disorderly, discontented and mutinous conduct and all kinds of vice. This was a problem of which contemporaries were fully aware and for which a number of remedies had been suggested (89). Little activity was the cause. We are led to believe that, after breakfast and the first parade, there may have been some parade-ground drill, followed by a period when the soldiers were probably cleaning their equipment. But after the mid-day meal there appears to have been no further military activity for the day. There is no mention of any field work, and the restriction on ammunition expenditure would have allowed only minimal musketry practice. On more than one occasion, this restriction placed the senior Imperial officer in South Australia into the embarrassing position of having to ask the colonial government for a supply of small arms ammunition, free of charge, to enable him to conduct some target practice (90). The only other activities of the Imperial troops in South Australia seem to have been helping with the harvest, and furnishing prison guards at places like Dry Creek. Also, some of them earned as much as 10/- per week making cabbage hats (91).

One of the results of idleness was drink, which in turn was largely responsible for the high crime rate amongst Imperial troops. Throughout their stay in South Australia, military crime showed no consistent pattern. During the first few years almost all offences were for desertion. One soldier, Corporal G. Gilkes of 96th Regiment of Foot (Manchester), deserted twice. His second attempt led him to Kangaroo Island, where he was recaptured by Inspector Tolmer who, incidentally,

devoted a whole chapter of his Reminiscences to this exploit (92). Perhaps he too had little to do. The high crime record of the 11th Regiment of Foot (Devonshire) was also due to desertion. Between 7th June, 1849 and 27th February, 1852, out of an average of fifty other ranks, fifteen were convicted of desertion. Actually, this unit was noted for having a sizeable number of non-drinkers. There is an interesting account of a 'military tea meeting', arranged by the non-commissioned officers and privates of the unit who were members of the Adelaide Total Abstinence Society.

Portions of the great barrack room were neatly decorated for the occasion with the Union Jack, under which the silken banner emblazoned with 'Total Abstinence' was placed. The pillars were adorned with muskets and bayonets ... and placards with the glorious names of Salamanca, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Nile, Orthes, Toulouse, Peninsula ... The soldiers were in smart military undress. The Officer Commanding, Captain R. Webster, and ladies were at the top table ... The Chairman congratulated the soldiers on their greatest conquest ... the triumph over bad habits (93).

From the fifties onwards, the main offence was drunkenness. For instance, between November, 1866 and August, 1867, 109 soldiers of the 2/14 Regiment of Foot (Yorkshire) were committed for sentence, 30 per cent for habitual drunkenness, 28 per cent for breaking barracks, 25 per cent for drunkenness, 12 per cent for absence without leave, and 5 per cent for miscellaneous offences, such as concealing disease or leaving guard. In other words, drunkenness accounted for 55 per cent of the crimes, and probably a further 40 per cent of the offences were indirectly attributable to alcohol (94).

The crime rate varied from unit to unit. Some units, such as the 99th Regiment of Foot (Duke of Edinburgh, Wiltshire), the 40th (2nd Somersetshire) and the 12th (Suffolk), one of the six Minden regiments, had no crime record at all.

The blameless record of the latter might have implied that regiments with longer and more renowned military traditions were better behaved, but this was not the case. The worst record belonged to the 11th Regiment of Foot (North Devon), yet this was the oldest unit ever to have served in South Australia, with a history dating back to the Monmouth rebellion in 1665. In 1849 the daily press complained constantly of thieving, robbery and brawling on the part of the troops, and exhorted their officers to enforce discipline (95). In 1866/67, at a time when serious efforts were being made to introduce wholesome spare-time activities into the British army, the overall annual military crime rate in South Australia stood at nearly 50 per cent of the number of men, while the overall British rate over an earlier period (1825-1835) did not exceed 10 per cent, even after including the penal units in Bermuda and Africa (96). The cost of administering penal arrangements for Imperial soldiers placed an additional burden on the Colony and penal facilities in South Australia were stretched to the limit (97).

In England strenuous efforts were made to ameliorate the life of soldiers (97a) but few, if any, attempts of this nature were made in South Australia. What appears to be the only recorded instance, refers to the establishment of a library in 1868, when the 50th Regiment was garrisoned in Adelaide. A room was set aside to serve both as a regimental school and library, an unsatisfactory arrangement because juveniles and adults were obliged to take turns in using the room which was, moreover, closed in the evenings. The book stock must have been very meagre. Suggestions were made to ask the South Australian Institute to support the venture, and it was also suggested that perhaps neither Hansard nor the Blue Books

were appropriate reading matter for soldiers. 'These men are strong hardy fellows but they could not stand any of such poor intellectual diet as this' (98).

This almost total lack of consideration reflected the community's general attitude to the Imperial garrisons. They were not part of a community based on truth and righteousness by choice; they were virtually foreigners. Nor were they considered worthy of attention, for the community generally saw only the bad elements, and was not prepared to extend the voluntary principle which had expressed itself in a number of philanthropic organisations<sup>to</sup> the soldiers of England. The feeling of disinterest, even of antipathy, must have been mutual <sup>in 1870,</sup> because, out of one hundred all ranks, only four liked South Australia well enough to take their discharge in the Colony (99).

While South Australians shed no tears when the body of the Imperial troops departed in 1870, they did pay tribute to some individual members of the Imperial contingents. The Register, for instance, spoke of a Sergeant Joseph Clarke, who had arrived in the Colony on 17th September, 1841, as the advance party for Captain Butler and his detachment of the 96th, as '... one of the best representatives the British Army ever had in this Colony' (100). Except for the odd expression of praise and perhaps personal regret, the majority of South Australians viewed with satisfaction the passing of a period of dependence on the Mother Country.



That this House (while fully recognising the claims of all portions of the British Empire to Imperial aid in their protection against perils arising from the consequences of Imperial Policy) is of the opinion that colonies exercising the rights of self government ought to undertake the main responsibility of providing for their own internal order and security and ought to assist in their own external defence.

On the 4th March, 1862, Arthur Mills moved the foregoing resolution in the House of Commons and sounded the death knell of the garrison system in the self-governing British settlement colonies. The Mills resolution was the culmination of a development which began in the early thirties, took some 30 years to mature, and a further 10 years to be put into effect.

The debate on the withdrawal of Imperial troops was triggered off by the question of military expenditure on Imperial garrisons in the settlement colonies which had little or no strategic defence significance. It was inaugurated by Earl Grey, Secretary of State for War and Colonies, who, naturally enough, turned his attention to the Australian colonies. At that time (1847) these colonies were not threatened by a foreign foe, their convict establishments were about to be broken up, and the need for Imperial protection had effectively ceased to exist. Henceforth the barracks and military stores would be transferred to the colonies at a nominal rent, while any Imperial soldier wishing to take his discharge in the colonies would be encouraged to do so (101).

In 1855, the Imperial Order of Battle in Australia was as follows :-

- 99th, Headquarters and seven companies in Hobart,  
one company each on Norfolk Island, at  
Launceston and in Perth
- 40th, Headquarters and five companies in Victoria,  
one company in South Australia
- 11th, Headquarters and six companies in New South Wales
- 12th, Headquarters and six companies in Victoria.

The opportunity to reduce the military establishment

presented itself at the outbreak of the Maori wars in 1856. The Governor of New South Wales, Sir William Dennison suggested that, since the number of convicts in Tasmania had decreased appreciably, three hundred men would be sufficient there. At the same time, Governor Hotham of Victoria felt that he had to have a full regiment (1,000 men) in view of the troubles on the Victorian gold-fields. As a result, the War Office decided to bring the 40th Regiment up to full war establishment by moving the South Australian contingent to Melbourne, releasing two depot companies from England and also bringing from Ireland the two remaining companies, which had been ready to move to Australia since August, 1854.

The new disposition was as follows -

40th, Headquarters and ten companies in Victoria  
 11th, Headquarters and six companies in New South Wales  
 12th, Headquarters and one company each in Hobart,  
 Launceston, Castlemaine, Norfolk Island, Perth  
 and Adelaide.

This meant an overall reduction from 2,800 to 2,200 men, and a corresponding saving for colonial budgets because, by that time, all garrisons in Australia were being paid by the colonies concerned, with the exception of troops guarding the remaining convict establishments at Perth and Hobart.

The re-organisation in the middle fifties was the first instalment of total troop withdrawal. Yet, the Governor of South Australia, Sir Richard MacDonnell, had somehow failed to appreciate the fact that a complete reversal of Imperial defence policy was about to take place. In 1860 he actually wanted to add another three companies to the South Australian Imperial Order of Battle, for reasons which cannot now be ascertained, other than, and this is purely speculative, to induce South Australians to be more enthusiastic about volunteering themselves.

Cost estimates supplied by Major General C.S. Pratt from his new Australian military headquarters in Melbourne,\* showed that three additional companies would have cost South Australia £11,756 in pay, plus another £6,787 to cover contingencies, that is, lodging allowance, rations (less Imperial stoppage), fuel and light, palliasse straw, washing and repairing of bedding, transport costs, advertising, barrack and hospital expenditure, chimney sweeping and the emptying of latrines (102), all of which amounted to <sup>an</sup> annual expenditure of some £70 per man, and thus well in excess of the cost of Imperial troops in the past\*\*. In 1859 the Secretary of State for War, Major-General Jonathan Peel, sought the creation of an Inter-Departmental Committee, charged with defining the respective liabilities of the War Office and the Colonial Office. This Committee was to deal with the question of the colonial contribution to Imperial defence. Nine years earlier the Governor of New South Wales, Sir William Dennison, had suggested that the cost of colonial defence should be shared equally by the colony concerned and by Great Britain (103). On this question the Committee was unable to reach unanimity. The main argument against the Dennison scheme was that a uniform policy would be impracticable and unfair, in view of economic and social differences between the colonies.

In South Australia, the reaction to the opinions expressed by the Committee was quite violent. The Observer considered them absurd: after all, New Zealand could not have made any stand against the Maoris, save for the presence of Imperial troops, particularly since the natives were outside the jurisdiction of the local legislature. Besides, if Great Britain

\* Australian military headquarters, by that time, had been transferred from Sydney to Melbourne, not without protest from South Australia, which objected to contributing funds for its maintenance.

\* Vide Appendix B1.

intended to drag the colonies into her own wars, on the Rhine or in Sicily, then Great Britain was also obliged to protect them. She could not expect 'to enjoy the glory of an Empire' on which the sun never sets 'without some little responsibility. If she cannot protect her colonies she should give them independence' (104).

In England the Inter-Departmental Committee more or less subscribed to the existing policy of withdrawing troops when circumstances allowed. However, this vague attempt to resolve the problem of maintaining garrisons in self-governing colonies did not satisfy Arthur Mills, M.P. for Taunton, or Charles Adderley, a leading member of the colonial reform group in the House of Commons. They were instrumental in the formation, in 1861, of The Select Committee of the Commons on Colonial Military Expenditure. A. Mills was appointed its Chairman, and it became widely known as the Mills Committee.

The Mills Committee began its task by collecting data on the cost of overseas military commitments. It was found that at that time the cost of maintaining garrisons abroad was £1,715,000 per annum of which the colonial governments contributed £370,000 or approximately 22 per cent, with the largest amounts coming from Ceylon and Victoria. The size of the Victorian contribution was influenced by the inclusion of colonial pay, which was high, due to the high cost of living in the Australian colonies (105).

The report of the Mills Committee, tabled in the House of Commons on 4th March, 1862, became 'the most important single document ... which was to lead at last to the evacuation of the self-governing colonies by the Imperial British Army' (106). The report divided British dependencies into two: firstly, colonies proper (settlements with varying degrees of self-government);

secondly, military garrisons, coaling stations and convict settlements maintained for Imperial purposes. The main resolution adopted by the Commons, as quoted at the beginning of this section, meant that Imperial troops would no longer be available for police duties nor, in the absence of an external threat, would there be any justification for maintaining garrisons for national defence. Immediate, total withdrawal from Australasia was not practicable in the early sixties. There were hostilities in New Zealand, and the troops there had to rely on logistic support from a secure base, Australia. Nevertheless, the policy of withdrawal was inaugurated by a circular to the Australian colonies, signed by the Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, on 26th June, 1863 (107), which set out the policy, to be followed in Australasian colonies. It specified that, for the time being, New Zealand was to be excluded from this policy, on account of the hostilities there. Western Australia was to have no troops at all (this was subsequently modified), and the Tasmanian garrison was to be fully maintained by England, because the convict settlement still existed at the time.

But there are, in the remaining colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, no exceptional circumstances to prevent the free application on the part of the Home Government of those principles which arise from or are correlative to the grant of responsible government (108).

Henceforth, England declined to accept responsibility for maintaining internal peace within her colonies and only recognised a defence obligation in the case of actual or threatened war. In Australia, an island land mass, sharing no frontiers with a potentially hostile country, the defence obligations were assumed to be met by the Royal Navy, while the colonies themselves were expected to make provisions for the

defence of their capital cities and principal ports. These provisions were to consist of local defence forces, and such fortifications and other installations 'as may be needed for efficiency and accommodation of such troops as may be raised in or sent to Australia' (109). Actually, Britain was prepared to make some Imperial troops available to serve as the nucleus for local forces. Subject to the convenience of the colonies concerned, and to their ability and willingness to pay the agreed financial contribution, the British Government proposed the following Order of Battle for Australia:

Colony	Regt. No. H.Q.	No. Coys.	Offi- cers	Other Ranks	Aust. H.Q.	Total	Financial Contributions
N.S.W. (1)	1	4	19	340	-	359	£14,360
Queensland	-	1	3	88	-	91	3,640
Victoria (2)	1	5	22	423	50	495	19,800
Tasmania (2)	-	3	11	249	-	260	10,400
South Aust.	-	2	6	166	-	172	6,880
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>£53,080</b>

- (1) New South Wales was to be the Head-Quarters of one regiment, with four companies in New South Wales, one in Queensland and four in New Zealand.
- (2) Victoria was to be the Head-Quarters of the second regiment, with five companies in that colony, two in South Australia and three in Tasmania, paid for by the Imperial Government. In addition, the Head-Quarters of the Australian Command with a strength of fifty all ranks, was to be stationed in Melbourne.

The colonial contribution was calculated on the basis of £40 per man (infantry) including colonial pay, but excluding officer lodging allowance. The British Government was to bear the cost of moving the troops from England to Australia, as well as the transport of relief forces. The cost of troop movements

within a colony, or any expenses incurred by transporting troops from one colony to another on request, had to be borne by the colony making the request (110).

The colonial contribution was to be paid in regular instalments. If the number of troops were to decrease - 'H.M. Government could not, under all circumstances, guarantee the definite number of troops originally envisaged' (111) - then the instalments would decrease accordingly. If, for any reason, the number of troops was to be augmented to suit the convenience of the British Government, no additional contribution would be payable by the colony concerned. If the colonies themselves desired to have infantry in addition to their quota, or required specialist troops (artillery, engineers, etc.), then they would have to pay for them at the rate of £70 per man per annum (112).

The foregoing provisions had to be ratified by the colonial legislatures. In 1863, the South Australian Government passed an act to authorise payments to be made to the Imperial Government as a contribution towards the cost of the military stationed in South Australia, to cover expenditure up to 31st December, 1870, at a rate of £6,880 per annum. In general, the principle of colonial contribution was not questioned. While South Australians had never been very enthusiastic about the presence of Imperial soldiers in their midst, they had always in the past voted the funds necessary for the troops' maintenance.

This time, however, considerable debate ensued in the legislature (113). Firstly, there was some confusion because the debate also dealt with a request for funds to maintain a military establishment of fifty all ranks in the Northern Territory, to protect the settlers there. Strangways opposed the Bill on the grounds that 'the Home Government seemed

desirous to settle a number of military unemployed comfortably in the colonies until they were wanted elsewhere ...' (114). Other members still saw the military as a means of maintaining law and order, at least till the colony could look after itself, rather than as a means of protection against aggression, and the government of the day did not make the distinction clear. The question of removal of troops at the will of the British Government was not properly understood. The belief that the general officer commanding had no power to remove the troops without the colonial governor's consent, was disproved by just such an occurrence in the colony at the Cape of Good Hope, whence Imperial troops were removed against the wishes of the Governor, Sir George Grey. The House also voiced the opinion that the quota of two companies was unnecessarily high. One was considered sufficient to supply the Government House guard and to protect the stockade. The House did not want to make the whole measure a permanent fixture and inclined towards treating it on an annual basis, like the English Mutiny Acts, a provision which was accommodated when the bill was re-introduced. By this means the measure ceased to be an addition to the civil list and became a vote of supply to the Queen. Even so, there was an overall feeling of resignation towards the presence of Imperial troops. It was generally felt that, although no one wanted them, South Australia would still have to accept whatever troops were sent, and would have to pay for them. Only one member, Duffield, really did want to retain Imperial troops in South Australia, on account of the 'revolutionary spirit that was about'\* (115).

\* The revolutionary spirit referred to some agitation by the inhabitants of Port Elliott against the government's refusal to extend the jetty to Granite Island. The agitators wanted to secede in order to join Victoria. Since some of them had taken the Oath of Allegiance as volunteers, Duffield considered the force unreliable, and consequently stressed the necessity for the Imperial troops continued presence in the Colony.



Although the passing of the Bill served to formalise what had been a fact of political life since 1842, the situation which emerged in the early sixties would have made the Adelphi planners turn in their graves at the sight of their successors openly trading the lofty moral principle of self-support for a business proposition.

The business proposition did appear to be quite sound, as long as the order of battle did not exceed one company. Imperial soldiers brought into the colony almost as much money (£31) as the colony paid out in royalties (\$40) per man. The slight imbalance of payment was compensated for by the increase in business turnover, which resulted from the presence of these additional people in the Colony. However, as soon as the military establishment exceeded one company, the Colony was obliged to pay for a number of supernumeraries (mainly officers) at a rate of £70 per man. In addition, the lodging allowance which the legislators had at first hopefully misunderstood to be a charge on the Lords of the Treasury, also had to be borne by the Colony. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of proposals were put forward in an effort to rectify this uneconomical arrangement. Some suggested reducing the strength of the police force (116), others recommended limiting the Imperial military establishment to one company (117), and some even wanted to suspend the colonial volunteers' effort (118). The last suggestion prompted Robert Lowe, one time member of the New South Wales Legislative Council and witness before the Mills Committee, to observe ironically that 'the presence of one Imperial soldier prevented one hundred colonials from arming and drilling' (119).

By 1870 the Imperial Government was preparing the climate for a total withdrawal of troops from the colonies.

The first step involved increasing various charges associated with the presence of Imperial garrisons. Lodging allowance rates for the senior officer in a colony were increased (120), while instructors or other supernumerary personnel had to be paid for at the higher capitation rate of £70 (121). The standard of barracks maintenance required by the War Office added another 6/- per man to the colonial expenditure (122) and the Imperial Government also ruled that its troops would not be subject to customs duties (123), that they were to be granted the privilege of reduced postal rates (124) and that Imperial officers were to be exempt from paying rates and taxes (125). Perhaps by the late sixties, Great Britain realised that, as long as Imperial troops remained in the colonies, the British taxpayer would be obliged to foot the bill for an arrangement from which only the colonies stood to profit (126). Or perhaps Britain just wished to force the self-governing colonies to accept responsibility for their own military protection.

Whatever the motive, in 1869 it was announced that all troops in excess of one regiment would be withdrawn (127). The headquarters of the Australia Command was to remain in Melbourne; the regimental headquarters would be in Sydney. The revised order of battle meant that four companies would be stationed in New South Wales, two in Victoria, two in South Australia and one each in Queensland and Tasmania, one battery of Artillery to be in Sydney and, if desired, one in Victoria. Although existing capitation fees were to remain in force for the time being, Britain intimated that a new enquiry was to be held soon to re-determine costs and '... it would be for the Australian Colonies to consider whether or not it [would be] worth their while to pay this increase for the presence of a small body of Her Majesty's troops' (128). The British Government would

be prepared to sell to the colonies, at cost price, any equipment surplus to requirements and to discharge other ranks of good repute and conduct in the colonies, prior to the departure of their units. It was also laid down that at least four companies were to be stationed in the same locality as a regimental headquarters (129), to prevent fragmentation of military strength, and, therefore, that if a colony requested troops in addition to the proposed order of battle, it would be obliged to take at least four companies and a head-quarters.

Perhaps predictably, the new conditions proved unacceptable to the colonies, and an Intercolonial Conference was convened, from 20th February to 5th March, 1870, to reconsider the whole question of Imperial protection. One of the South Australian delegates, J.H. Barrow, even suggested that, since Imperial troops were to be withdrawn, the Australian colonies should be declared neutral in the event of a war involving Britain (130). Barrow's suggestion proved acutely embarrassing for South Australia's Governor Fergusson, who hastened to reassure the Colonial Office that a single proposal for neutrality was not to be taken as a reflection of the Colony's attitude generally (131). Fergusson pointed out that public opinion in the Colony '... must always be determined by the circumstances of the day'. At the time when war with Russia appeared to threaten, the Colony called for troops and guns; now, only a few years later, it fretted at the presence of a small detachment. The Governor even suggested that, provided troops could be guaranteed to the colony under any circumstances, she would actually be glad to retain them.

While the 2/18 Regiment of Foot, the Royal Irish, prepared for departure, Fergusson made a last unsuccessful attempt to retain the unit in the Colony. The Colonial

Secretary's refusal (132) implied that, in principle, Great Britain was determined to end the Imperial garrison system in the settlement colonies, but would consent to garrisons under certain conditions. For instance, Britain would only send a complete regiment overseas, hence, since Queensland and Victoria declined to have any troops at all, Tasmania was undecided, and South Australia only wanted one company, it would be impossible to have a full regiment in Australia. Also, since regimental fragmentation was not acceptable, Royal Artillery, in itself requiring additional expenses for specialised equipment and horses, could not stay behind without infantry protection, either (133). The fact that in Australia, artillery would have been used for training purposes only, was completely ignored. One gains the impression that England acted with almost indecent haste.

The South Australian Legislative Council debate in July, 1870, (134) once again embarrassed the governor, for the tone of the debate showed that South Australia just was not interested in Imperial forces, not even naval forces which would have cost the Colony nothing.

The effect of a naval squadron stationed in the colonies would be to cause a considerable amount of money to be circulated in Sydney and Melbourne... but so far as this Colony South Australia was concerned the visits of the squadron would be like angels' visits, few and far between.' (135)

The South Australian Upper House apparently felt that any defence forces were bad unless good for business.

Finally, on 17th August, 1870, the Royal Irish Regiment left South Australia on the Aldinga, bound for Melbourne and England. The era of Imperial protection was at an end.

## 2.4 The Effects of the Imperial Withdrawal

### The British View - The South Australian View

It is not likely ... that our colonists would ... engage to aid us in our purely European wars. Australia would scarcely find herself deeply interested in the guarantee of Luxembourg, not Canada in the affairs of Servia.

Sir Charles Dilke, 1868

Independence [from the Crown] could scarcely make us more independent whilst it would entail upon us pure responsibilities from which we are now happily free ... Our loyal attachment to the Crown ... is unimpaired and we have the best of reasons - self-interest - for seeking to continue under Imperial protection.

Observer of 1st April, 1871

The British view, indicated by Sir Charles Dilke (136) was a logical one and based on personal observations. Dilke did not agree with Gladstone's assertions hopefully stated before the Mills Committee in 1861 and some years later in a speech at Leeds, that the Australian colonies would come to Britain's assistance in the event of war (137). Contemporary English opinion saw in the withdrawal of the Imperial garrison a turning point in the history of the Empire (138): Empire ties had been ruptured because the outer visible signs of Imperial unity had been removed (139).

South Australians did not shed any tears over the withdrawal of the British garrison, mainly for political reasons. Although the Colony had paid the piper half of the cost, she had no share in calling the tune. For instance, South Australians had little say in what sort of troops they could obtain, nor was the presence of the troops in the Colony ever guaranteed. There was some irritation, more so in Victoria than in South Australia, that Colonies had no control over their monetary contributions, because all dealings with the Imperial troops went through the governor as the agent of the Crown rather than as the Head of the colonial government.

Secondly, very strong objections against the Imperial troops were felt on the grounds that the garrison was a state within the state. The troops had little contact with the people. In South Australia there were too few officers to mix effectively within the stratas and circles normally open to them, quite apart from the fact that they could not afford, financially, to participate in the social rounds. They were relegated to a comparatively minor position on the precedence table. It was not until 1864 that lieutenant-colonels in South Australia began to rank next to the bishop or the chief-justice and majors next to the solicitor-general (140). The other ranks fared little better. The high rate of drunkenness and the very obvious idleness of the soldiers did not endear them to a population which contained a high percentage of non-conformists: the dissenters were quite glad to see that sort of Imperial representation go because it did not conform to their ideas of moral values.

Overall, South Australians took a very practical view of the whole question. From the establishment of responsible government in 1856 onwards, the colonists had unfettered control over their lands, their economy, and their overseas trade. The only acknowledgment of allegiance to the Crown was the granting of a salary and certain prerogatives to the Queen's representative. At the same time, they were not particularly interested in Empire defence, let alone the notion of assisting Great Britain in any of her wars; other than in 1854, the occasion simply had not arisen. Secondly, they were '... imbued with a touching belief in the ubiquity and omnipotence of the British fleet ...' (141)\* and on this belief all Australians

\* These were the words of a South Australian volunteer officer, G. Le M. Gretton, who eventually obtained a commission in the 3rd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire.

thrived for many decades. But in 1870 or 1871 it was very much a case of having the best of two worlds - protection by Great Britain through her navy with no obligation to return a quid pro quo.

The Colony's attitude is perhaps best explained by an unawareness of the winds of change in Great Britain towards Empire following Disraeli's famous Crystal Palace speech in June, 1872. Empire, with the more obvious financial burden removed from the taxpayer, was now looked upon as a potential asset, a view which took quite some time to filter through to South Australia, and it was not until two years later that a more positive attitude to Empire defence became noticeable in the Colony.

In the end the termination of the garrison system did not rupture Imperial ties but rather strengthened them. Non-British activities in the Pacific and fears of foreign attack made South Australians appreciate the advantage of connection with Empire and brought home to the colonists the 'stern necessity of self-reliance' (142).

It were these considerations which eventually led to the formulation of a South Australian defence policy and the establishment of the South Australian military and naval forces.

CHAPTER IIITHE BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE POLICY

This Government realises it had no option but to accept the position that this Colony is thrown entirely on its resources in the event of war.

Chief-Secretary of South Australia, 1870 (1)

What do you think is preferable to say to a Colony which is willing to pay a certain amount towards its defences, that it should contribute in the shape of part payment for Imperial troops or that it should raise a Colonial force of its own.

Question put to Lord Herbert and J.R. Godley by the Mills Committee in 1861 (2)

My main object is to throw upon the Colonists that habit and responsibility of self-defence.

J.R. Godley in 1861 (3)

Australians would feel very succinctly the dangers to which they are exposed by virtue of their connection with England and the hardship of being ravaged with fire and sword for the sake of Polish nationality and the redress of balance of power in Europe.

Adelaide Times, 17.9.1864



### 3.1 British Protection or Colonial Self-reliance

Until the out-break of the Crimean War, there was a general understanding in South Australia that England was under an obligation to safe-guard the external security of the colonies, particularly while they were undergoing a struggle for settlement, for economic progress and for internal stability. No one doubted that the Mother Country would look after her offspring. Besides, the Empire was at peace, and the power of the Empire, that is, the power of Great Britain, was believed to be such that any ideas of challenging it were simply laughable. Enemies just did not exist.

The outward sign of British power, the men-of-war, were in the area but their visits to South Australia were few. Between 1841 and 1854 only two ships called at South Australia's principal port: the 18-gun frigate Fly in 1845, and the 22-gun frigate Phantom in 1854. These rare visits had caused no concern, but after the Crimean War some apprehension was expressed that British men-of-war never seemed to be near the Colony, and that the Flag was not shown as much as it might have been (4). It was felt that '... as long as we remain Britain's dependancies her honour is concerned in preserving our shore' (5).

These were the first rumblings of a movement towards neutrality and perhaps the first doubts regarding Britain's intention, or even ability, to protect South Australia against a foreign attack. In 1860, the daily press stressed the poor performance of Colonel C.E. Gold and his regular British troops in New Zealand. It was also felt that the Australian colonies were too far away, for Britain to give effective help: by the time Britain learned of an attack it might be too late. The

colonies still considered themselves entitled to some help, but 'if Britain was prepared and anxious to abandon her distant children and thus lose her prestige ... that was her affair' (6).

The then Governor of South Australia, Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, lost no time in advising London of the colonists' apprehensions, but counselled against spending money on Imperial troops and suggested it would be wiser to use the expenditure on 'teaching Her Majesty's loyal subjects here to defend the soil themselves, if necessary' (7).

MacDonnell had not always held this view. His ideas on defence had undergone a remarkable metamorphosis since July, 1859, when he suggested that four companies of regulars be stationed in South Australia; although more expensive, they would be a better proposition than volunteers. One month later he asked for six Armstrong guns and 12 artillery pensioners to train volunteers (8), but later was prepared to make do with only five pensioners (9). In the course of his correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle the governor realised that no additional troops, would be forthcoming unless the Colony paid heavily for them.(10) Aware now of Britain's attitude, MacDonnell went to the other extreme, that of rejecting all Imperial troops.

Britain was insisting on colonial self-reliance. She not only tried to persuade the South Australians; she was forcing them to see the advantages of maintaining their own defence forces. In 1862 the Duke of Newcastle tried to impress on South Australians the necessity of looking after their own defence. 'The alarm\* will not have been wholly useless if it shall have impressed upon the Colonial Governments the necessity of

\*The threatened war between the United States of America and Great Britain.

prompt and effectual preparations against contingencies' (11). The same sentiment was also voiced by the Governor, Sir Dominick Daly, in 1863. 'The public mind should become familiarised with the total absence of Her Majesty's troops ...' (12). Although by 1865, South Australians appeared to be convinced that they would have to rely on themselves for protection, the actual advantages of self-reliance were still being stressed, from time to time, as if it was necessary to convince the colonists of their validity. The press insisted that South Australians were good soldiers, and that it was better to have one's own men than to have to ask, repeatedly, for troops, who seemed almost like foreigners, and who were also very expensive (13).

In the latter part of 1865 a new notion crept into the colonists' heads. While the question of whether or not to rely on its own volunteers was quite settled in principle, it became known that, under certain conditions, British troops were still obtainable. With adolescent petulance, South Australians asked,

why should a policeman in blue do duty before Government House in Adelaide whilst a soldier in red has to perform similar work in the rest of Her Majesty's dependencies ... [and] why has this Colony no share at all in the red cloth and pipeclay so liberally provided? (14)

Here was South Australia, missing out on a free hand-out, and totally unaware, apparently, that the free garrisons applied only to posts maintained for Imperial purposes. The truth must have been known to many people in the Colony, yet no attempt was made to enlighten the public.

While the debate was generally childish, there were also political, indeed almost radical under-tones. The press took South Australians to task for lacking the true pioneering spirit of the early American colonists (15), who were less con-

cerned with rapid economic progress, (with a view to returning home with huge colonial fortunes) but who wished to live and to die in their new lands. They were, therefore, imbued with a military frontier spirit which enabled them to defend themselves against the Indians and the French. In the Australian colonies people were far too busy making money to waste their time on soldiering and to squander their precious labour force on non-profit ventures. They preferred to leave their protection to providence and the Horse Guards.

Even those who accepted the concept of self-reliance tended to view it from two different sides (16). The radical theorists argued that, not having Imperial troops in the Colony, and having to rely on oneself, made the citizens truly free people, through the association of both the burden and the privilege of freedom. The more practical colonists appreciated changes in Empire defence, brought about by improved communications, and realised that, if England concentrated her forces in Europe, they could be all the more expeditiously sent to a trouble spot. If thus speedily dealt with, international conflagrations were less likely to involve the Australian colonies.

The evidence given by Gladstone and Lowe before the Mills Committee largely reflected these two attitudes. Gladstone maintained that scarcity of labour had never been an excuse for lack of self-defence anywhere, and also that the garrison system had done serious harm to the spirit of freedom and self-reliance. The more cynical Lowe thought it 'strange that we, the English, should send people from England to defend the antipodes while we leave the young men of Australia to grow up without the knowledge of arms'. Some of Lowe's remarks appealed to the radical elements in South Australia, particularly

his comments on the popularity of large military expenditure in the capital cities, and the money which could be made out of war, provided that it was carried on somewhere else (17).

In 1870 the Imperial troops left, thus effectively settling the question. The Colony had accepted Britain's view that the troops had, after all, been no more than a formal link with the Crown, not an admission of British responsibility for protecting the colonies. It was up to the colonies themselves to resist aggression, and this could only be done by relying on their own strength (18). This realisation compelled South Australians to ask themselves two basic questions: whom do we have to fear and why and what should our relationship with England be. The colonists knew that both these questions had been discussed from the early sixties onwards, and they also knew that the problems were complex and inextricably inter-dependent.

## 3.2

South Australia's Fears of Aggression

Australian colonies occupied a unique position in the history of the British Empire: their security was never threatened. By contrast, the American colonies fought against the Indians or against the French, the Canadians faced aggression from America, New Zealand had its Maori Wars and the settlers at the Cape were confronted with attacks by African tribes. As prosperity in Australia grew, particularly after the gold rushes, the colonies felt they were now important enough to invite foreign aggression. It was possible, though, that

... the belief that distant powers would consider an Australian colony a desirable prize was really a symptom of the colonies' growing satisfaction with their own situation and the frequent discussion of the best means of withholding an attack from the current enemy was really a form of shadow boxing ... (19)

However, in the latter part of the 19th century, Australia's fears of aggression tended to be associated with potential involvement in the wars of Great Britain. This was coupled with an Australian Monroe Doctrine, evident as early as 1827, when the Sydney Gazette argued that Australia could not afford to let any foreign power gain a foot-hold near her shores (20). Also colonial rivalries of the great powers could produce 'another Europe, a powder keg which may blow up into Australian faces' (21).

Mainland Asia itself played little part in Australia's fears, for it was controlled by Europe. The Chinese were not seen as a military menace, but only as a socially disturbing influence which, by the end of the century, had become the cause of the White Australia Policy (22).

The Japanese, at first, were seen as a source of potential cheap labour. It was not until the end of the century, after the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95, that Japan was considered a potential enemy. From that period onwards some of the New South Wales annual military exer-

cises took the form of repelling fictitious Japanese raids on Sydney Harbour, when A.M. Simpson, South Australian M.H.A., warned of the new warlike power in the East (23).

Most Australians saw the rise of Japan as a chance for a healthy balance of power and an effective barrier against the advance of the 'dreaded Muscovite' (24), and many considered that

the drivel about British protection [had] in fact become part of the Australian's very existence, and but for this he would long ago have perceived that his country [was] already better protected than Britain herself and that, with the single exception of Russia, no State in all Europe was so invulnerable as this continent (25).

The arguments were sound and based not on political conjectures but simply on the physical difficulties involved in equipping a major expeditionary force and sending it half way round the globe to annex Australia. In the days of sail such expeditions were considered possible, but in the days of steam they were out of the question. The Mexican venture of Napoleon III, the defence of Plevna and events in South America were cited as evidence that '1,000 leagues of open sea was a stronger bulwark than 100,000 men and that two oceans were a more reliable rampart than the two largest armies to be found anywhere on this earth' (26). Nevertheless, Australians in turn feared the French, the Americans, the Russians and the Germans.

#### The French

Animosity to France was traditional. Most of the early settlers either remembered the French wars or had actively participated in them. Early French explorers had shown interest in both Australia and the Pacific, and Napoleon I was said to have instructed his admirals to attack the Australian settlements as a means of diverting British naval and military

power (27 ).

French influence began to make itself felt with Bougainville in 1766, and was sustained by de Surville, Fresne, La Perouse and Baudin. The latter particularly, aroused suspicions of French intentions in New Holland and elsewhere east of the Cape of Good Hope. As a result, Norfolk Island was settled, followed by expeditions to Van Diemen's Land. In 1826 King George Sound was established to counteract French and American designs in the Pacific, and then Stirling advanced French activities as one of his arguments for a settlement in Western Australia (28). Similarly, fears of French aggression led to attempts to establish an Imperial garrison on the North Coast of Australia (29 (30)).

French exploration of the Pacific Islands at the turn of the century was largely scientific, but d'Urville's second voyage, 1837-1840, added political and economic undertones which were duly noted in Australia. 'The French ... were motivated by the spirit of nationalistic competition with the British on one hand and hopes of future economic growth on the other' (31). Beginning with the reign of Louis Philippe, France desired to recover her former position as a great Imperial power, and avidly sought new territory in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the South West Pacific. News of the French establishment in Tahiti aroused anger in Australia, and prompted a sort of Pacific Monroe Doctrine, which, although repudiated by Britain, insisted that the Pacific islands were British, either as a protectorate or by sovereignty. In actual fact, the Australians had no legal authority to do anything about it, Britain had no firm policy on the matter, and the French,



Germans and Americans lacked the power to implement their interests and subsequently to sustain them.

South Australians reacted quite sanely to French scares. In 1841 there was a remote risk of war between France and England over some contentious points concerning Egypt and Syria, and France had allegedly begun military preparations on a large scale. Yet, the daily press in South Australia declared that 'immediate war ... was not contemplated, for it would be ridiculous to think of attacking England with twenty sail of line ...' (32). Similarly, the Ville de Bordeaux incident in February, 1841, was not regarded as a potential threat to the safety of the Colony, although fifty years later, Hodder interpreted it as such (33). What did happen was that the French ship called at Holdfast Bay to buy sheep and other live-stock for Bourbon, and aroused the suspicions of the Governor's secretary, who promptly instructed Captain Biron, her master, to hand the vessel over to the harbour authorities, which the latter refused to do. R.R. Torrens, the Collector of Customs, then proceeded to seize the ship. In the meantime, the authorities assumed that the French ship had sailed away and sent the steamer Courier after her. The pursuit, later referred to as the 'shingle expedition', cost the government £800 (34). C.R. Badger's investigation in 1930 clearly showed that no military or naval measures of any kind were warranted (35).

French activities in the Pacific did cause some concern of a non-military nature. Australians had always had a certain proprietary interest in New Caledonia (sandalwood and coconut oil trade) and a suggestion had even been made, in 1842, for a system of colonisation on the island. Thus, when the

French established their sovereignty over New Caledonia, in 1853, Australia's protests were very bitter (36). However, England was too preoccupied with Russia to heed them, and besides, trade continued to flourish unimpaired.

The 1859 crisis in the Franco-Austrian war was also viewed as a <sup>purely</sup> European affair. Britain might not stay neutral, particularly in view of the French naval build-up in the Mediterranean, but, in general, the colonies, and South Australia in particular, were not likely to be affected (37). More attention was paid to the reported strengthening of French naval forces in New Caledonia, from six men-of-war to nine, and the Observer suggested that Britain ought to counter French threats in the Pacific by creating military establishments on islands not yet annexed, in order to forestall a French monopoly in the area (38). At any rate, Britain's declaration of neutrality, in August 1859, closed the subject for the time being. Consequently, while no-one trusted Napoleon III, or his motives, responsible public opinion suggested, that 'we have nothing to fear from France ...' (39). The idea of a French, or any other foreign threat was even mildly ridiculed. There were suggestions that the ladies should form a corps of archers and become dead shots into the hearts of Frenchmen, and that duck farms should be established to placate invading gourmets (40).

Why then, in contrast to the general public calm, had members of the South Australian legislature become so alarmed? (41) Perhaps information received from the Colonial Secretary, Sir E.B. Lytton, produced this state of mind. The dispatch of 6th May, 1859 (42), expressed the hope that Britain may remain neutral in the conflict. However, the Governor,

Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, was to consult the senior military officer regarding precautionary measures, and was to warn the legislature that special funds may need to be allocated for defence purposes. The Governor was also instructed to treat the dispatch itself as secret, to avoid panic, something he apparently did with indifferent success. Subsequently, Governor MacDonnell reported that the Executive Council had 'resolved' to propose an address of loyalty to the Throne. That was the only step taken in preparation for defence (43).

With the 1859 crisis over, South Australians ceased to fear the likelihood of attack by France. Indignation did run high in the colonies when the French introduced convicts into the Pacific, in 1864 and again in 1871, but the commercial and agrarian dissenters in South Australia were not unduly disturbed. In fact, they quite welcomed this potential increase in consumer demands, which would have to be satisfied from Australia (44), and were only mildly concerned when France exported to New Zealand a potential danger to property, in the form of a few evicted communists (45). The perfect navigation of the French cruiser Magon, visiting South Australia in 1885, aroused some suspicion: she seemed to know the coast too well. Nevertheless, her visit was made the occasion of great festivities (46), and the same friendliness prevailed during the visit of the cruiser Duchaffault in 1888 (47).

By 1894, only one prominent South Australian remained who was still afraid of France: Sir Charles Todd, the Postmaster-General. He recommended the laying of a new cable from Singapore, via Labuan to Hong Kong, because it would 'greatly add to the security of communications in the event of war with France ...' (48).

### The Americans

American scares were of a different nature. The French presence in the Pacific had induced anxieties based, mainly, on memories of a traditional enemy. American scares, such as they were, introduced Australians to the danger of privateers and lone raiders, and set the pattern for hostile acts which could be expected to result from Australia's involvement in Empire wars.

South Australians were aware that Americans had been active in the Pacific. Their first contact, in 1837, was with the American whalers, employed by the New South Wales Whaling Company,\* at the time mainly concerned with deep-sea sperm whaling and only intermittently engaged in bay whaling (49). The only possibility of hostile involvement with the United States of America came in 1861 when England seemed on the verge of war with the Union (50).

It was not the American nation, but American individuals who posed a threat to Australia. When Commander Charles Wilkes made an unobserved land-fall in Sydney on 2nd December, 1839, with four men-of-war, New South Wales became alarmed over the defenceless state of the Colony. The Sydney Morning Herald for the next few years did not let its readers forget that 'American ships, half whalers, half smugglers, half privateers range d the entire coast of New Holland ...' (51). Fitzhardinge contends that the American privateers' success during the 1812-1814 war had made such an impression that they were not forgotten for another forty years (52).

\* See Chapter 1.

During the Crimean War privateers of another kind must have been feared, although only indirect evidence is available from a later historian. Since Russian fleets had been bottled up in Baltic and Pacific ports, it was said that Russian agents in America were endeavouring to equip privateers with mixed Russian and American crews (53).

The threat posed by privateers did not escape the notice of South Australian colonists. Although in 1861, the South Australian press discounted the probability of war with America, it did not rule out the possibility of 'danger ... from lawless privateers who might make a sudden and stealthy approach to our shores and attempt a dash at our banks' (54). It was this article, 'suggesting the exercise of ordinary prudence' which brought forth one of the earliest detailed defence schemes in South Australia.

Fear of privateers led to a celebrated hoax\*. On 16th February, 1871, the Colonial Office sent the following message -

British Government have received statement which they do not credit but think it right to send, that a filibustering expedition is to leave the United States this month for Melbourne, Sydney and Otago (55).

\* The background to the filibuster expedition was reported a few weeks later in the Observer (56), reprinted from the Melbourne Age (date unknown). Two colonial Agents-General were told by a Mr. Stuart, a Tasmanian, that two young men, one calling himself Bethune and claiming to be the nephew of the Bishop of Toronto, had told him that a ship was being fitted out in America, nominally on behalf of France, but actually with the aim of raiding the principal Australian ports and the mail steamers. The plan was to slip through the Melbourne Heads at night, get alongside the Nelson, capture her, turn her guns on the city and then levy blackmail upon the Treasury and the banks. Having been invited to join the venture, Mr Stuart feigned interest, but as soon as the two adventurers left for America, he divulged the scheme to the authorities.

The message caused little alarm even in New South Wales (57), and was totally discounted in South Australia (58.), but the incident showed how inadequate communications would have been, if put to the test. The cypher telegram from London was received at Ceylon on 16.2.1871. Exactly one month later, it reached the Governor of Queensland, having left Adelaide, after an unexplained delay, on the 14th March, going all the way via Wentworth and Sydney in clear, because 'there were no cypher arrangements in Brisbane' (59). It was indeed fortunate that the threatened attack was a hoax.

### The Russians

In Australia in the 19th century more scares were caused by Russia than by any other nation, although Australians had far more actual contact with the other powers which had ventured into the Pacific. Russia had become the bogeyman of the century.

The Russians came to the Pacific overland\*. After Atlasov had explored Kamchatka, in 1697 to 1698, Russia's hold on the Pacific coast of North West Asia was firmly established. Her sea-faring activities commenced with Peter the Great, and culminated in Behring's two expeditions of 1728-30 and 1740-41. In 1767, Alaska was declared a Russian colony, whose rich fur resources were exploited by the Russian-American Company.

\* In tracing the history of Russia's presence in the Pacific, and her early contacts with Australia, the author has leaned on V.H. Fitzhardinge's 'Russian-Australian Relations in the 19th Century'.

However, the main aim of the early Russian voyages into the Pacific was to gather scientific data, to train naval personnel, and to secure and maintain communications between Russia and the Orient.

The Russians called at Australian ports between 1804 and 1835, but not between 1836, and 1862. The Polish insurrection of 1830 created an anti-Russian climate; a more important reason was that, at the time, Australia had few surplus supplies which she could afford to sell. There were no prospects of large scale trade between Russian settlements and Australian colonies (60) since the main Russian export was furs, in which Australians were hardly interested, and Australian produced wool, grain and coal did not really interest the Russians. Export quantities of grain were not produced regularly, while the belated use of steam power in Russian ships did not create a need for coal till after 1850.

Since peaceful, trade-based relations with Russia were unlikely, hostile confrontations appeared all the more probable, particularly in view of Russia's logistic and communication advantages over Great Britain (61). Logistically, the main British naval force, on the China Station, was at a disadvantage because coal supplies had to be obtained from Vancouver or from New South Wales. Russia, on the other hand, had coal resources at her disposal on the Pacific coast. As far as communications were concerned, Russia's advantage was even greater. A continuous wire connected St. Petersburg with Vladivostock, which was itself in direct communication with Yokohama by means of cable, operated by the wholly Russian owned Danish Telegraph Line Company (62). The British line of communication ended at the unprotected port of Hong Kong, and messages to other British possessions in the Pacific were

subject to hostile interference. In other words, the Russian Pacific fleet could be warned for action long before the British China station would be alerted (63). The Russians had one more advantage. Theirs was a combined naval and military command, while British naval and military policy and administration were totally unco-ordinated.

Fears of Russian hostility towards British lands, naturally increased during the Crimean War. After all, the Empire was at war with Russia. But there was no panic, no cries of Hannibal ante portas. The safety of distance, and slowness of communications probably reduced any awareness of direct danger or of immediate involvement in the affairs of the Empire. This was to come later. However, during the crisis of 1858/59, a certain degree of Empire consciousness was already noticeable, more so than four years previously. The following resolution was passed by the South Australian House of Assembly:

We assure Your Majesty of our resolution to resist to the utmost of our ability in defending and up-holding the integrity of the British Empire as well as in maintaining the security of this province (64),

and it should be noted that in this resolution the integrity of the Empire was considered first. The threat was to the Empire, rather than to the safety of the Colony.

The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 caused little more concern than did the crises of 1859 or of the middle sixties, because British neutrality provisions were promulgated almost the day war broke out (65). The government's concern at the time (1870) was for the safety of communications. The line communication operated by the Anglo-Australian Telegraph Company Ltd, led from Galle (Ceylon), via Darwin, to Adelaide, from where the news was distributed to other colonies. Still, the line was not considered vulnerable enough to justify the



alternative, a fast steamer standing by at either terminal (66).

During the war between Russia and Turkey, in 1877 and 1878, Britain just barely managed to remain neutral. In South Australia there was genuine concern at the possibility of endangering the Colony by being drawn into Empire hostilities. Public meetings were held, as far away as Port Pirie. A number of resolutions were passed demanding various military measures. South Australians argued that if a hostile naval force did succeed in evading British squadrons on the high seas, it was not likely to attack the well-protected ports of Sydney and Melbourne, but it could well enter the St. Vincent Gulf undetected and threaten Adelaide. Perhaps the answer lay in Sir William Jervois' suggestion: a South Australian man-of-war (67). Thus, a minor attack by sea was thought possible, but South Australians realised that a large scale threat from Russia was unlikely, because she did not have the necessary military or financial resources. Disraeli would drive a hard bargain, and win, while the Americans, although amicably disposed towards the Russians, would remain neutral, because they saw no profit in an alliance with Russia (68). Disraeli did drive a hard bargain and there was no war. The colonists passed a resolution at the Town Hall meeting on 31.7.79, thanking the Prime Minister for his part in the Congress of Berlin. Disraeli sent his thanks to the mayor and his fellow colonists for a highly valued honour, and added that ... 'at the same time I cannot refrain from conveying to you the sentiments of affection and pride with which England has received from the Members of her Colonial family the repeated evidence of their sympathy, their loyalty and their high spirit' (69).

of 1885.  
Then came the Sudan crisis, / Gladstone had to face

the English nation over the fate of General Gordon, mourned by his relatives in Adelaide. In the same year the Pendjeh incident occurred. The Russians had occupied Nerv in 1883 and an Anglo-Russian Commission had been formed to fix the frontiers of Afghanistan, but in 1885 the Russians embarked upon a punitive expedition, defeating the Afghans at Pendjeh, and appearing to threaten India. Gladstone was obliged to move troops from Africa to guard England's most valuable dominion.

One gathers from letters to the press, records of public meetings, the newspapers themselves and legislative proceedings that, during the stirring weeks of April and May, 1885,\* fears of danger to the Empire came to be identified with fears of danger to the Colony. South Australians referred to the Afghanistan frontier as their own: '... the Russians ... must not be allowed to occupy the mountains contiguous to our\*\* frontier' and insisted that

we at this remote part of the Queen's dominions are moved by the same hopes and fears and respond to the same incitements to patriotism as influence our fellow subjects in Great Britain (70).

But whatever sympathies the colonists shared with the common Englishman, whose aspirations might be thwarted if the colonial Empire disappeared, any suggestions of sending troops to India, 'thus actively defending the Empire, were considered preposterous (71). '... The interests of the Empire could best be served by keeping the troops here' (72). Danger to Empire meant danger to South Australia.

The press did its best to promote defence preparedness,

\* See Appendix-G for a resumé of South Australian newspaper articles dealing with the 1885 crisis.

\*\*Author's italics.

if only by circulating every available rumour. The Observer and the Register, for instance, reported that the Premier of Victoria had received advice from Singapore of a Russian war-ship, sailing from the Cape, bound for Australia. A report of this nature produced some constructive suggestions, for instance the scheme for a watch along the east coast of Eyre Peninsula. It also produced such nonsense as the proposal for keeping large stocks of charcoal, sulphur and saltpeter handy, for 'mixing into a composition called gunpowder' (73). 1885 was also an election year, making it difficult to distinguish between election propaganda and genuine anxiety. At an election meeting in the Strathalbyn Institute on 14th April, 1885, a speaker suggested, 'I do not suppose you up here in Strathalbyn are nearly so excited and scared at the prospects of war with Russia as the people in Adelaide ... (laughter) ... if the Government had done one-tenth of what had been suggested they should have been put into the lunatic asylum ...' (74). At the same time, the Observer, normally a level-headed and responsible paper, gave every evidence of believing that Hannibal was indeed ante portas. \* Full page articles were devoted to the defence effort. The public was told exactly what was being done to ensure its safety, including details of first line ammunition holdings at the gun positions.

South Australians appeared to be 'imbued with the touching belief in the ubiquity and omnipotence of the British Fleet' (75) and, therefore, did not concern themselves prior to 1860 or so seriously with the possibility of threats to their hearths and homes from Russian raiders.

\* South Australia passed militia and volunteer acts, certain shipping regulations were promulgated and some precautionary measures were taken. For details, see Chapter IX.

They changed their view when, in 1862, the Russian cruiser Svetlana passed through the heads of Port Phillip Bay without being examined by the coastal batteries. From that moment, South Australians began to face the defence problem likely to be posed by lone raiders (76). Serious concern followed publication of a most bizarre story. During the Polish insurrection of 1863/1864, Rakowsky, a Polish officer serving on the Bogatyr under Admiral Popov, was said to have passed to his uncle in Melbourne information concerning a Russian plan to raid major ports on the eastern seaboard of Australia. This information reached the Premier of Victoria, who in turn informed the Governor, Sir Charles Darling. Alarmed, Darling alerted his own military authorities, and his colleagues in other colonies. By that time, however, the Polish insurrection had been crushed, and danger from the 1864 conflagration in Schleswig-Holstein had passed. (77) (78) Consequently, the story was kept quiet, until July, 1864, when an article in the Times created a political uproar in South Australia. The press even alleged that there was a Russian nobleman, spying in Australia (79.), while the legislature capitalized on the incident to attack the government, firstly for concealing the information and, secondly, for doing nothing about it (80.).

The whole affair seemed barely credible, but it was possible that after the Crimean War, when her fleets were so successfully bottled up in Baltic and Pacific ports, Russia realised that a repetition of the situation could only be avoided by striking hard at British commerce in distant waters, to draw British naval power away from the seat of hostilities. Such a move would have caused fragmentation of British naval power and would have had the added advantage of the principle of surprise. It was a new concept in naval warfare and the

credit for this new strategy, utilized by the Germans in both World Wars, appears to belong to the Russians (81 ).

Major General Steward, General Officer Commanding in Victoria, reported an incident (82 ), not unlike the Rakowsky case in 1864. Since, to the best of the author's knowledge, it has not been published previously, it will be related here.

It began in Yokohama in the early seventies. A Royal Marine officer became acquainted with a Russian colonel, allegedly a secret agent, who wished to marry an American from San Francisco. The lady desired an English-speaking witness; the Royal Marine officer obliged. During the ensuing conviviality the plot leaked out. Apparently, the Russian colonel had brought with him detailed admiralty charts of the Australian coast-line, as well as operation plans and orders prepared by Admiral Lesofski of St. Petersburg. The Russian fleet at Yokohama was to be informed of a declaration of war within hours, thanks to the Vladivostok cable, and days before the British ships, cruising off Yokohama, and dependent on a fast packet bringing the news from the Hong Kong cable terminal, could learn of it. The plan called for the Russian ships to leave port singly, and rendezvous at Lochoo for coaling. (Steward maintained in his memorandum that the coaling arrangement was confirmed by a member of the firm of Walsh, Hall & Co., who had sent part of an 1,100 ton coal consignment to the island in response to a Russian direction.) The fleet, allegedly consisting of seventeen cruisers and one iron-clad, was then to have proceeded to Newcastle, which was to be shelled and compelled to refuel the ships. The next attack was to be on Sydney, forcing the city to hand over the bullion in the banks. The same procedure was then to be repeated in Melbourne, from where the fleet was to sail around Australia, stop at Newcastle

and make for San Francisco. There the ships were to be left with maintenance crews, while the remainder of the personnel went overland to the East Coast, purchased new vessels, and sallied forth once more.

Although perhaps somewhat more credible than the Rakowsky story, there are one or two points which make Steward's report a curious tale. A man of Steward's standing should have realised that, since the average British ship had a range of only 5,000 miles, and this did not allow for peak speeds during fighting, or for loss of speed due to fouling of bottoms, then even if Russian ships had the range of the British vessels, they could scarcely have reached Brisbane, let alone Newcastle. At the same time, the Royal Marine officer claimed the unlikely distinction of being in the full confidence of the Russian Admiral commanding the Asiatic squadron, whom he described as a man 'who appears to have preserved the instinct of a true buccaneer', and whom he yet accused of unpardonable frankness over his post prandial cups: 'Fancy one, after all, missing such a chance of attacking Australia : Six million sterling! Why, there would not have been such a coup since the days of the Spanish galleons!'

The possible consequences of naval strategy of this nature did not entirely escape notice in South Australia, but without arousing anxiety. The visit of the Russian corvette Bozarin off Glenelg in May, 1870, hardly caused comment (83). Then in February, 1882, the citizens of Glenelg awoke one morning to find three Russian ships, the Afrika, Vestnik and Platon, commanded by Admiral Aslanbegoff, anchored off shore. Adelaide had never before been honoured by a visit from Russian naval vessels (.84) and the Mayor of Glenelg, on his own authority, invited them to anchor off Glenelg, turning their

one week stay into a tourist attraction. The visitors were lavishly entertained. Admiral Aslanbegoff visited Port Adelaide and, judging from his utterances reported in the daily press, had not been aware of such extensive port facilities. The Admiral's remarks would indicate that the Russian Admiralty had no precise information about the approaches to Adelaide (85). The Russians, in turn, threw the Afrika open for public inspection. Her fish torpedoes, with a range of almost 750 yards, were particularly admired. Governor Sir William Jervois organized a picnic at Mt Lofty, where he and the Admiral made a number of speeches. Loud cheers from the crowd accompanied Sir William's words: 'This is the first time we have ever had a visit from a Russian squadron and we herald its advent to South Australian waters' (86). The fact that the fleet had slipped unobserved past the Kangaroo Island signal station did not appear to disturb anybody.

The courteous and cheerful attitude displayed by South Australia toward the Russian visitors contrasted rather sharply with the hysteria and discourteous provocation, displayed by the Melbourne press, at that time running a campaign for the strengthening of Melbourne's defences and improvements in the volunteer movement (87). The Age, in the early and middle eighties, was particularly vociferous in its anti-Russian sentiments. It, too, fell victim to a hoax. This particular story concerned a secret dispatch, allegedly sent by the Russian Admiral, in code, through the Melbourne Post Office. It outlined the plan for a lightning attack on Melbourne, to be followed by similar attacks on the other Australian ports and later on Fiji. The hoaxer was an ex-New Caledonian convict, named Henry Bryant, alias Comte Henry de Beaumont. The incident, described in

detail by Fitzhardinge (88), drew a sarcastic remark from the Earl of Kimberley when he commented on Sir William Jervois' enthusiastic report of progress in South Australia's defence preparedness: 'It is to be hoped that they the colonists will someday "progress" to the point where panics will not be caused by such silly hoaxes as that which scared Victoria the other day' (89).

A few attempts to keep the Russo-phobia alive still persisted after 1885, but no-one took any notice of the account of How we captured Adelaide - from the private log of Captain Korfuloff, I.R.N. (90), nor was there any reaction to Major-General A.B. Tulloch's worry about the inevitable war with Russia (91). From 1892 onwards, fears of a conflict with Russia gradually vanished, despite frantic efforts of chauvinists like B.C. Craig, whose interest in keeping the Russian scare alive was purely commercial. He was the agent for the Hotchkiss Ordnance Company and the Nobel organisation, which produced smokeless powder (92).

The Franco-Russian military convention, directed against Germany, was followed, in 1896, by the visits of Czar Nicholas II to France and England, and from that time the three countries moved rapidly towards the Entente Cordiale of 1904.

Fears of war between the British Empire and Russia occupied the minds of South Australians intermittently for about forty years, no matter what the realities of the situation were. France, the United States of America, Japan and China played a lesser role. These fears had created a defence awareness concerned with the hearths and homes of the colonists



and with the Empire as a whole and which was the stimulant of defence preparations.

Throughout the discussion of possible threats to South Australian security there emerged the other aspect of defence for the Colony, namely, should the Colony remain in the British Empire, and thus become subject to the effects of European politics, or should the Colony separate and thus avoid becoming embroiled in Britain's wars.

### 3.3 Connections with the Empire and the Influence of European Politics

There was a growing feeling in Australia, after 1859, that its close connection with England was not altogether a blessing (93). John Dunmore Lang of New South Wales was the first to express the idea of separation in his speech to the miners at Sofala on the Trurou River. Lang was convinced that, if Australia wanted to have peace and to avoid the ravages of war, independence was the only way to achieve this (94). He advocated separation because he could not see how authority and liberty could be reconciled within the Empire, how a young and virile community could avoid becoming embroiled in affairs in which she had no say and over which she had no control.

He was not alone in expressing these sentiments. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, partner in the shipping firm of McIlwraith and McEacharn, would-be-annexer of New Guinea and one time Premier of Queensland, Mr Justice Williams of Victoria, Sir George Dibbs of New South Wales, J.H. Barrow and P.M. Glynn, members of the South Australian House of Assembly, to mention but a few, held the same views. Undoubtedly, these people were influenced by British opinion. The anti-colonial sentiments of the Manchester School, most strongly expressed in Gladstone's first ministry, made it quite clear to anybody who wanted to know, that the colonies were expected to separate.

On the other hand, the separation sentiment was by no means universal. South Australians felt that, while there undoubtedly was an argument for severing the ties with the Empire, 'it would show much want of wisdom to cast off allegiance to a power that would have taken tremendous vengeance for ... an outrage committed by an enemy of England' (95).

The idea of separation was not seriously discussed

until after 1859, when the threat <sup>posed by</sup> / Great Britain's possible intervention in Italy had passed. As Sir Richard MacDonnell told the Duke of Newcastle, 'the Imperial Government should take cognisance that the Colony required protection ... in wars in whose commencement or termination it had neither voice nor influence' (96). One might read into this statement that South Australia did want to be protected in a war not of her own choosing, but otherwise was prepared to look after herself.

The Schleswig-Holstein crisis in 1864 brought a new element into the problem of Imperial relations, namely, the suggestion, not so much of separation, but rather of the right of neutrality, should Britain be involved in a war. The notion of neutrality was probably stronger among South Australians than was the notion of independence and complete separation from Britain. They feared loss of trade, and bombardment of the city by some enemy with whom they really had no quarrel. The concept of neutrality appealed to the practical dissenters. It was a case of having the cake and eating it too. If attacked by a major power, the Colony would have every right to expect the assistance of the Crown, but if England became involved in war over some European issue or other, the Colony would stay neutral, avoid having its harbour and city bombarded, and probably do roaring business with both sides. Several prominent South Australians put forward proposals which went even further than the views generally held in the other Australian colonies. They actually suggested that, since the colonies were now to all intents and purposes sovereign nations, having been asked to defend themselves, they should also have the right to make treaties with foreign powers. At the same time, Great Britain was not to make treaties which were binding on the colonies (97).

In May, 1865, the Observer, under the heading The Mother Country and the Colonies, aired the whole concept of Empire relationships (98). England's role appeared to be that of an affectionate and yet authoritative parent or, alternatively, that of the patronising big brother, 'who reserves to himself the special privilege of lecturing us occasionally, but in return defends us against the rest of the world'. The colonies might indeed be faced with the occasional bombardment from a hostile power as a result of their connection with England, but England herself would have far more to lose if the colonies were independent. She would lose prestige because she was vitally concerned with the integrity and dignity of the Empire. She needed the colonies as an outlet for her surplus population and, being a manufacturing country, she was obliged to remain on the best of terms with countries which produced her raw materials. Nor would Australia's independence significantly have reduced England's expenditure. The Observer felt that the question of separation was not really relevant, because over the last few years Britain had, by and large, shown unquestionable good will and a desire to please colonies, simply by sanctioning any proposals the colonies made. It was suggested that it would be wise for her (England) to continue this policy. 'If the Colonial Office assumed the same relationship to the colonies as the Queen holds to the other estates in the Constitution, it would merely reign over them, but not govern them' and as a result 'the colonies would shine as satellites of the great central luminary with a distinction of their own, determined, however, by their relation to the general system' (99).

These prophetic words were not generally appreciated, particularly by the more radical section of the community. The Adelaide Times certainly disagreed, but at the same time,

it, too, had some misgivings about separation. Australia's military weakness was an open invitation to a hostile power.

The local cash tills may as effectively be emptied, their [the colonists'] warehouses as completely ransacked, their women as grievously wronged by the epauletted warriors of European states as by those romantic bushrangers who have revived the memory of Dick Turpin in the secluded valleys of Australia (100).

It became clear by the late sixties that neutrality, rather than complete independence, was generally favoured in South Australia. At the same time there was a feeling that, although the Colony would always have to look towards a large military power for protection, this large military power need not necessarily be Great Britain. For instance, it was suggested that the role could be filled by India, the only large military power in the East at the time (101). The suggestion was the first sign that there were people who already considered Australia to be part of Asia rather than a part of Europe. John Henry Barrow, M.L.C., one of the South Australian delegates to the Inter-Colonial Conference in June, 1870, moved on that occasion that, since Britain had withdrawn Imperial troops, the Australian colonies should be accorded, by treaty or otherwise, the position of neutral states in the event of war (102). Another South Australian H.T.B. Strangways, also wanted neutrality but still expected the British Navy to safe-guard the sea lanes (103).

Meanwhile in Britain the opposition to Empire waned, a change of heart generally attributed to a speech made by Benjamin Disraeli in the Crystal Palace in London in June, 1872. The formation of two organisations, the Imperial Federation League and the Imperial Federation (Defence) League, was an expression of the new look in Empire relationships. The old view, that Britain should be freed from the burden of protecting her colonies, began to disappear. It was now envisaged that these

same colonies should participate in the defence of the Empire as a whole. This changed outlook was based firstly on the emergence of new strategic concepts and the fact that the change from sail to steam meant a reduced sailing range, unless the British Navy had coaling stations readily available. Also, the Navy had, over the years, become the police force of the seas. This resulted in a degree of localisation and fragmentation of naval power, in contradiction to one of the main Principles of War, namely that of concentration of force. The new concept of naval strategy required large and powerful capital ships, concentrated where they would be most effective in containing the naval forces of rival powers, and that was in European waters. The Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865 was thus the first step towards removing British ships from duty on distant colonial stations.

The new look in Empire relations also had some politico-geographical aspects. Despite the prophets of Empire dismemberment, people in the colonies were in no hurry to separate from England, or even to take concrete steps to ensure neutrality in time of war. On the contrary, there were definite signs that the colonists were eager to contribute towards Empire defence. Thus colonies were beginning to be regarded in England as assets after all. Distances had shrunk, and improved communications made the vision of an integrated Empire quite feasible. Finally, the colonies were wealthy and populous and could be considered a source of material support for England. The greater Britain could conceivably be transformed into a political union, something like the German Zollverein. The proponents of political union, or rather of federation, were concerned with the promotion of trade and the evolution of political machinery which would give the colonies a voice in Imperial matters.

While the general public in England had no clear idea of the meaning of Imperial federation (104), the Australian public and press reacted sharply against the concept of political federation. There was suspicion that the colonies were being used to further British power ambitions, or else to lighten the financial burden of the British taxpayer. There was fear, manifestly expressed by the Bulletin, that the growth of Australian nationalism would be stunted. The Register demanded, in what Hall called the most selfish voice of nationalism, that Australia's right of self-government be left intact and she must not have 'any equal share of burden of Imperial expenditure' (105).

On the military side, the Imperial Federation (Defence) League was one of these semi-official organisations which published its addresses in the Royal United Services Institution, the Royal Colonial Institute and similar venues, and whose members were usually serving officers, whose views were respected. The aims of the Defence League included the creation of an Empire Council, combination of the total resources of the Empire for defence, and the participation of self-governing colonies in bearing the cost of Empire defence. It was the last aspect to which the colonies objected. Robert Muirhead Collins, the secretary of the Melbourne Defence Committee, in 1894 explained that the colonists were not likely to become enthusiastic over Imperial federation after the way England had treated Australia's interests in the Pacific, particularly with regard to New Guinea, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia (106).

South Australians at first appeared to support the military aim of the Defence League. 'The only practicable method of maintaining the political integrity of an Empire, so widely scattered, is a combination for mutual defence ...' (107). Every rumour of war seemed to stimulate the colonies'

identification with the Empire, '... our honour was their honour, our interests their interests, our wars their wars' (108). But the early enthusiasm for participation in formalised Empire defence soon evaporated. The Observer, on one occasion, pointed out that the Imperial Defence Federalists were unaware of the axiom that there should be no taxation without representation (109). As far as Empire defence commitments were concerned, the League failed to make its mark in South Australia.

Just as Imperial federation failed to commend itself to South Australians, so as the 19th century drew to a close, the idea of neutrality gradually waned. As early as 1870, the Register, the Colony's leading daily newspaper, was not altogether convinced that neutrality would work. While neutrality had many advocates, the paper felt that the time for independence was not yet ripe (110). A decade later the Register was convinced that separation was inevitable, but that it would come as the result of a European conflagration, rather than by the implementation of a political theory. Unsure of the views of its readers, the newspaper was careful to dissociate itself from any strong pro-separation movement and rebuked those who advocated it, particularly if they were Victorians (111). Still, in 1887 the Register stated quite categorically that 'there is no disguising the fact that the chief danger to the colonies arises from their connection with England' (112). By 1888 the paper admitted that 'Eventually separation may be inevitable - we cannot tell' (113), and in the following year retreated to the view that, 'there are very many in Australia who think things are tending towards separation ... but few would want that if closer unity were in any way possible (114). In November of the same year the paper was quite adamant that separation should be avoided (115). Thereafter, any mention of neutrality was part of a series of gestures to indicate merely that South Australia was not receiving the attention it deserved in London.



In retrospect, it might be said that fears of Russian attacks upon the shores of the Colony or war between Russia and the Empire dominated considerations of defence in South Australia. Thus the question 'Who is the enemy?' was interwoven with the question 'What is our relationship with Great Britain in wars in which she is involved?'. One must accept that by and large, there was no militant agitation for separation, or even for neutrality in the event of war. The two alternatives were debated in a rather desultory fashion, with the inevitable conclusion that, irrespective of the final solution, self-defence within the Empire was the only practical solution. Although South Australians from the middle eighties onwards were rather more Empire conscious than they had been earlier, they were still not disposed to share with England the burden of Empire defence. If they accelerated their defence preparedness it was probably not due to any desire to participate in the expansion of the Empire. The major stimulant for their defence efforts in the third quarter of the 19th century was an awareness of the dangers associated with being members of the British Empire.

CHAPTER IVSOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE POLICY - ITS FORMULATION  
1854-1887

The attack then, most to be apprehended by this Colony, is from an expedition consisting of a fleet or squadron superior to the united ships of war on the station and with a sufficient military force to enable the enemy to seize and retain some port affording both secure anchorage and ready means of refitting their vessels.

I am of the opinion that in addition to the kind of attack mentioned in the report, the Colony is at the present time open to an attack from any single ship which could, with ease, be off the Semaphore and shell the Port and thereby compel the payment of a large sum of money to prevent the destruction of property.

Colonel J.H. Biggs' evidence  
before the Hart Committee, 1865 (1)

I should, however, prefer that any immediate expenditure which may be contemplated should be devoted to the development of your military forces, because it is on these that you will have ultimately to rely for the preservation of your independence.

Major-General J.B. Edwards, 1890 (2)

Citizen soldiers should be felt and not seen. They should be dispersed like mosquitoes in every bush. That would be the best defence.

Observer, 1865 (3)

#### 4.1 Military Appreciations of Possible Attacks on South Australia

South Australia's defence policy was influenced by four factors, namely, strategic considerations of fixed and/or mobile defences required to meet an attack on the Colony, the influence of overseas military thought and assistance, changes in tactical doctrine and, finally, the question of the type of military force best suited to protect the Colony.

Large scale attacks were considered unlikely after the fifties; it was felt that the Royal Navy would detect and destroy any large force before it could reach South Australian waters. On the other hand, there had always been the possibility of one ship, or even of a small task force, eluding the vigilance of the Royal Navy and suddenly appearing off Glenelg and demanding ransom. In assessing the feasibility of either a full-scale landing operation or of a hit-and-run raid, it must be borne in mind that, whatever defence measures the colonies, singly or jointly, might have been able to muster, a large scale landing operation, aimed at even a temporary occupancy of the coastal districts, would have required a superiority in numbers of at least five to one.

Hindsight suggests that a hit-and-run raid was the more feasible. In fact, during the Crimean War, the Colonial Secretary, B.T. Finnis, made the possibility of a raid on Port Adelaide the key point of his defence memorandum to Sir Henry Young (4). The First Hart Commission of 1858 dismissed the possibility of a large scale naval attack, or of a raid by a number of privateers, since both required extensive coaling facilities; since a lone warship could land 50-100 men at most, an attack of that nature was not considered; a serious threat

It appears that no full official appreciations,

existed of the kind of force required to secure and hold a part of the Adelaide coast line. However, private individuals did publish, in the daily press, a number of articles which could be termed appreciations, and are worthy of comment. One of these, by Lieutenant-Colonel R.R. Torrens, was in the form of a letter (6), in which he discounted the possibility of a force large enough to effect a permanent occupation, but stressed the likelihood of sneak raids. He pointed out that small steam sloops could easily hide around the various islands in Bass Strait, or even around Kangaroo Island and then move quietly up the Port River, which should therefore be rendered un navigable by booms and other obstacles, covered by a battery on Torrens Island. Since plunder of Adelaide <sup>of</sup> or the port would be the only likely motive for such an attack, the enemy would not land more than 5,000 men. (Apparently, the colonel was not aware of the number of ships required to transport such a force, otherwise he would not have classified the proposed raid as a sneak attack.)

A more realistic appreciation was published in 1864 (7). The writer envisaged two 50-gun frigates landing 500 to 600 men before daylight. Colonel J.H. Biggs, in the same year, suggested that an enemy could land troops anywhere between Marino and Port Adelaide, from ships lying in 9 feet of water some 600 yards off shore, close enough to be able to cover the landing with naval guns. Alternatively, enemy ships could lie 3,000 yards off and silence the fixed gun emplacement on the shore. Therefore he advocated no fixed defences, but stressed the need for communications, via a road behind the sandhills to permit rapid troop movements, and port protection by mines actuated by the newly invented magneto-electrical devices (8).

In 1865 opinions were sought from two visiting naval officers, Commander G.H. Parkin of H.M.S. Falcon and Commodore Sir W.F. Wiseman, commanding the Australia Station.\* Parkin's appreciation was very much what could have been expected from a brief visit. He thought there were three means of attack, firstly by a composite force, secondly, a predatory raid by one or two cruisers, and thirdly, by fireships being sent into the Port River (10). Commodore Wiseman, in 1866, was more specific. Ships drawing 15'-16' could easily disembark a composite force anywhere along the coast, from a distance of one mile off shore. Such a force could then advance on Adelaide and easily outflank any defensive works. In order to maintain mobility and flexibility, the South Australian forces would, therefore, have to be concentrated near the city.

Wiseman considered a predatory raid the more likely form of attack, including shelling the principal coastal installations and harbour facilities, and perhaps landing not more than, say, 450 men, although it would have been very foolish of the enemy, to embark a force it was not able to support (11). Wiseman's views were shared by Freeling and Scratchley in the same year (12).

Perhaps the only comprehensive appreciation, for a possible enemy attack, was made in 1877 by the Governor of South Australia, Sir William Drummond Jervois, R.E. (13). He envisaged an enemy, either capturing commercial vessels at the entrance of the two gulfs, or raiding Wallaroo for coal supplies and then proceeding to Adelaide, with the intention of destroying the port and extracting ransom. He pointed out

\* The Australia Station had become a Commodore's Station in 1853. It was now completely separate from the China and India Stations (9).

that, compared with the other capital cities, with their land-locked harbours, Adelaide was far more vulnerable because its long coast-line offered numerous accessible landing places. Jervois had apparently considered the various factors which might determine an enemy's plan of attack quite thoroughly, but he failed to draw any valid conclusion regarding the means of repelling a landing, once it had taken place. Instead, he asserted that the best means of defending the Colony was by ships at sea.

A novel idea was expressed by an amateur during the crisis of 1885 (14). Cruisers and not iron-clads would be the means of landing troops, because the iron-clads with their greater coal requirements, would not have the range to reach South Australia. Three cruisers would menace Glenelg, staying out of gun range. Two other cruisers, under cover of darkness, would go to Port Gawler and land troops, which would then advance swiftly on Gawler township, seize the railway, and come to Adelaide by train, while the local forces remained deployed in the sandhills near the coast, watching the movements of the diversionary force. If carried out in sufficient force, such an attack might well have succeeded.

Major General J. Bevan Edwards' report<sup>\*</sup>, in 1886, 'relating to the inspection of the military forces of the Australian Colonies' (15), was criticised by the Colonial Defence Committee (C.D.C.)<sup>\*</sup> on strategic grounds. The Committee had expressed its own views on attacks on Australia in a Colonial Office Circular dispatch of 14.1.1890, making it quite clear that it considered Australia the safest of all British possessions, by virtue of its distance from hostile bases. The concentration of large enemy forces to effect even a temporary occupation would have been impossible, while raids

\* Vide section 4.3 and chapters VII and VIII for more detailed  
discussions

for the purpose of refuelling were difficult to envisage; even if there was coal on the ground near the water's edge, many men and the appropriate facilities would be required to get it aboard. As for extracting ransom, the C.D.C. thought it 'inconceivable that any Australasian town would consent to pay blackmail, which the British race have not done for upwards of a thousand years' (16). Finally, General Edwards had counselled against fortifying Glenelg, on the grounds that an enemy cruiser could not approach closer than 11,500 yards, that the small amount of ammunition which a cruiser could afford to expend on such a bombardment would not be effective, and that, as long as there were no guns at Glenelg, it would be internationally illegal to bombard the town. The C.D.C. considered the latter idea somewhat naive (17).

In 1892 Captain John Walcott, R.N., the naval commandant of South Australia, firmly stated that

the idea of a military force being landed in Australia is a new bogie. As long as the British Navy is maintained in its present relative condition, it is not practicable to convey them [the hostile force] by sea and will not be attempted(18).

Walcott considered the landing of a sufficiently strong force from cruisers impossible. Cruisers could not carry large military landing parties, while to use crew members to effect landings would have left the ship defenceless before an intercepting vessel. Without facilities to effect repairs a cruiser would avoid fighting. She would rendezvous with her own coal-ship, which probably sailed under a neutral flag, at unfrequented anchorages, and then dash at a lone merchant ship of the nearest centre of commerce to do as much damage as possible. (This was written twenty-two years before the Emden was to operate in Australian waters.) It was believed that the best means of defence against such an attack would be provided

Firstly by ships and, secondly by fixed installations, despite the fact that the latter were practically inoperative at night.

Two elements are missing from all the foregoing appreciations. For instance, there is no evidence that the effort required for a large scale attack on Australian soil was ever considered from a strategical point of view. Everyone dismissed the idea as impracticable, without proving the fact. On the tactical side, given that an enemy had been able to concentrate a strong enough force and to establish a beach head on South Australian soil, how would this have affected the South Australian defence effort and military counter measures?

The militia field force in Adelaide in 1890\* consisted of a half squadron of cavalry (about 50 all ranks), one battery of field artillery (four 16-pdr. rifled muzzle loading guns), and three infantry battalions of about three hundred men each. In addition, there were 450 or so mounted rifles in the country districts, and 620 volunteer infantry. Not counting garrison artillery, the total South Australian strength consisted of 500 mounted troops in five squadrons, one obsolete field battery, including two Nordenfelt machine guns, and ten rifle companies of 100 men each.

During the Franco-Prussian war a superiority of 2:1 appeared to be the rule wherever victory was achieved. For an amphibious operation, a superiority of 3:1 infantry and 2:1 cavalry might well have been necessary. In other words, an attacking force would have had to muster about 3,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, including at least 1,000 horses, and probably three or four field batteries (16 guns) which, in turn, would have required at least 100 horses and about 200 personnel. Including staff and administrative personnel, the force necessary to effect even a temporary occupation of the South

\* Vide Appendix W



Australian metropolitan coastal district would have had to consist of some 5,000 men and 1,000 horses. Such a force would have required 41,000 gross tons of shipping transport, to which another 10 per cent would have had to be added for contingencies. The estimate of the total size of such an expeditionary force is based on data available for the British trooper H.M.S. Himalaya, which took a complete cavalry regiment to the Crimea, and for the Indian trooper H.M.S. Malabar. These ships had a displacement of 3,500 and 5,600 tons respectively, and a radius of action of 4,500 miles at their respective speeds of 10 and 15 knots.

Thus a hostile fleet would have required eight to ten transports, three colliers and three to five escort vessels: a minimum of, say, 15 ships, and even an unopposed landing would have taken about 10-12 hours. This last estimate is based on a report of putting 9,000 men ashore at Quinteros Bay in 1891, where the transports had been provided with two flat bottomed boats each capable of carrying 150 men (19). It would have been a formidable effort to mount, even against untrained opposition. But the South Australian defence forces had had a certain amount of training. They were good shots, and within a few hours could have mustered enough men to oppose the initial landing. The transports would either have had to stop 3-4 miles short of Fort Glanville and Fort Largs, or the escort vessels would have had to silence the forts to allow the transports to come close in shore. In either case the element of surprise would have been lost.

Thus the previously mentioned story, How we captured Adelaide, South Australia, by Ivan Korfuloff, I.R.N. (20), which described how 1,000 men, seven machine guns and two

rocket tubes had been landed within 40 minutes, defeated the local troops, and reached the city, all within a few hours, was tactically unsound. In fact, considering the distance on shore to be covered by a landing party, the nature of the terrain west of Adelaide, and the relative strength of the opposing forces, a successful advance seems to have been most unlikely. Then, as now, there was little natural cover. Enemy forces would have been exposed almost from the moment they cleared the littoral sand dunes. Progress from, say, the Semaphore or Fort Largs area would have been impeded by swamps. Hence the approach to contact would have had to follow the easily defensible road system. An approach from the southern beaches would have been time consuming and open to flank attacks by mobile forces. Such an approach would have required a much larger force, with considerable field artillery support because the advancing troops would soon have been out of range of supporting naval guns.

The obvious counter to an enemy landing anywhere along the Adelaide Littoral area should have been a heavy concentration of mounted troops, say 10 squadrons, deployed south of Adelaide, and supported by at least 4 to 6 batteries of field artillery, attacking the enemy flanks from high ground to the south east, while west of the city two infantry battalions in a defensive position could have protected the approaches from the two western and Fort Largs beaches. However, the South Australian military effort was not based on tactical considerations but on the findings of commissions, on the recommendations of various experts and on political factors. It was not till the arrival of Sir William Drummond Jervois <sup>in 1877</sup> that the defence policy of South Australia assumed something of professional significance.

#### 4.2 Defence Commissions - Defence Experts - Defence Schemes

The possibility of war with Russia became apparent early in 1854. The South Australian Governor, Sir Henry Young, proceeded to appoint a commission, consisting of Major E. Moore, 11th Regiment of Foot, Captain T. Lipson, R.N., and Captain W.H. Freeling, R.E., 'to enquire and report upon certain precautionary measures of defence ... in the event of ... war'. The Commission was appointed on 17th May, under the chairmanship of B.T. Finniss and ten days later submitted its report (21) recommending that the Colony should acquire a 400-ton naval vessel. Imperial assistance was to be requested for the selection and procurement of the ship, but the cost was to be defrayed by the Colony. The Commission also recommended the installation of semaphore stations from Cape Borda, along the northern coast of Kangaroo Island to Backstairs Passage, and from there along the eastern shore of the Gulf of St. Vincent, up to Adelaide, the port and the lightship. The regular force of Imperial troops was to be augmented by another company, or the existing force was to be made up to full strength of 100 all ranks. The fourth suggestion contained the embodiment of a militia drawn from the Port Adelaide, Alberton and Queenstown districts. Fifthly, the Commission recommended the establishment of an artillery force. The final recommendations concerned the arrangement of coast patrols, boom defences across the Port River, and the erection of a protective battery on Torrens Island. The latter, a long term project, was felt to be more properly the consideration of the Imperial Government, and a plan for the Torrens Island battery was subsequently submitted by Colonel R.R. Torrens (21). Actually Torrens himself did not believe in the scheme. He pointed to the high engineering

costs of the project and to the time factor involved. He also stressed the tactical limitations of the scheme: the battery could not impede a landing further south on the Peninsula, by-passing the fixed defences. Torrens favoured a block vessel, and recommended that the major portion of the available funds be spent on mobile defences.

Thus, in 1854, the First Finniess Commission set the pattern for future defence considerations in the Colony. The first line of defence was assumed to be the responsibility of Great Britain, through the Royal Navy. The second line was the defence of coastal waters. The third/fourth lines were port and coastal land defences, in the form of properly constructed fortifications or gun emplacements, and the fifth line consisted of mobile land forces.

The first line of defence, provided by the Royal Navy, was considered indispensable for safe-guarding the approaches to Australia, and was always assumed to be guaranteed. The defence of the coastal waters, the second line, was seen by Victoria as a coastal naval problem. South Australians at first saw it as a military problem, that is as an extension or a substitute for the third line, the fixed coastal land defences. It was only from the seventies and eighties onwards that shore defence was allied with the protection of sea approaches to the Colony. The mobile land forces, on the other hand, were always considered a conditio sine qua defence was inconceivable.

Every one of the numerous defence commissions convened in South Australia, and all the recommendations made by local or visiting naval and military experts, considered these five lines of defence. At first the emphasis fell on the fifth line of defence, the mobile forces. From the middle seventies

to about 1890 fixed coastal defences, in conjunction with sea-going defences, were thought more important. The nineties saw the pendulum swinging back towards mobile land forces.

Few, if any, of the recommendations of the First Finniss Commission were implemented. New war clouds appeared on the horizon in 1858, when Britain's involvement in Italy seemed imminent. As a result, the Second Finniss Commission was convened as a sub-committee of the Executive Council. Its report again stressed the need for a gun boat, which was now, somewhat naively, expected to be a Royal Navy vessel, 'permanently stationed in the Colony and removable only by order of the governor to any other part of the Colony for the time being as might seem most expedient' (22). The Commission also wanted the Imperial infantry changed to a force of regular artillery and recommended that the mobile forces should consist of a cavalry regiment, two field batteries and a slightly understrength regiment of infantry.

The house of assembly was not satisfied with the report of the executive council sub-committee and in 1858 appointed its own 'select committee to take evidence and report on the question of colonial defences', which came to be known as the First Hart Commission, after its chairman, Captain J. Hart, a one-time merchant seaman. The members were largely ex-service officers with low level and out-of-date naval and military experience. Their report (23) showed a preference for fixed defences. Three Martello Towers\* were recommended, for Torrens Island, Semaphore and Glenelg. The Colony was to be divided into districts and rolls were to be kept of persons eligible to serve. In other words, the report recommended

\* Martello Towers had been designed in England as defence works against a Napoleonic invasion. They were round structures, 40' high, mounted three to four guns, and were accessible by a ladder leading to the entrance door 20' above the ground.

the establishment of mechanics for implementing the Militia Act. It also paid lip service to the voluntary principle, by recommending the formation and official encouragement of rifle clubs and making vague references to co-operation with Imperial naval authorities. Since the house of assembly did not approve the Martello towers, (they were likely to be more expensive than a shallow draft gun boat) the only concrete result of the report was the placing of a sum of £4,500 on the estimates for 1859 (24).

The 1864 scare (disclosure of plans for an alleged Russian raid) produced two investigations. The first was submitted, on his own initiative, by J.H. Biggs, the South Australian military commandant (25). Biggs objected to fixed defences as too costly and ineffective, and advocated full reliance on troops whose mobility was to be increased by the construction of a military road. Apparently, the government was not altogether satisfied with the Biggs report. In 1865 a full scale parliamentary enquiry was ordered, to 'inquire into and report upon the best means of defending the coast of South Australia against an attack from an enemy in vessels of war and to offer suggestions for the general protection of the Province from foreign aggression ...' (26). Once again John Hart was chairman.

More or less unanimously, the Second Hart Commission recommended the procurement from England of a number of heavy guns a full battery of rifled field artillery, and the raising of a paid volunteer force of 700 infantry and 200 artillery men. But individual members objected to the erection of revolving cupola towers, the purchase of field artillery or the construction of a military road, and some were opposed to the

formation of cavalry. Only one member recommended fixed artillery positions (cupola towers), together with the purchase of an armoured gun boat, with a light draught and very heavy armament, capable of speeding at 18 to 20 knots over a measured mile with a 96 hour coal capacity at full speed. Such a vessel at that time was technically not feasible. The press was sympathetic to the Second Hart Commission, readily supporting its recommendations on mobile defence (27). The reason, apart from cost, was probably psychological: mobile defence implied reliance on the courage and skill of the individual citizen, rather than on impersonal bricks and mortar.

Soon after the Commission's report was tabled, the British sloop, H.M.S. Falcon paid a visit to South Australia. The house of assembly requested the governor to invite Commander G.H. Parkin to have a look at the local defence problem and report on it (28). Parkin recommended the stationing of six gun boats at certain points, with one 100 pdr. smooth bore gun positioned immediately south of the pilot station. He also recommended round towers to cover the approaches to Adelaide, instead of revolving cupola towers, which would have been more expensive and soon rendered inoperative by flying sand from the dunes. The report was not very well received (29). It was labelled 'gratis advice to the poor'. The scheme was too costly, since gunboats were too expensive, while the ordnance suggested by Parkin was unnecessarily heavy against troops in the open. The critics considered a mobile field battery of 32 pdr. guns more economical, as well as more effective.

Parkin's recommendations were more or less repeated by Commodore W.F. Wiseman, senior naval officer on the Australia Station, during his visit to the Colony in April,

1866. Instead of gun boats, Wiseman suggested Martello type towers, roughly where Parkin wanted to place the field artillery (30). One or two attempts were made by the South Australian Government to implement some of the recommendations (31), but the main, and ironic, significance of the two naval reports lay in swinging official opinion towards the principle of fixed land defences. Perhaps the sailors realised that Australians were landlubbers. Australians themselves had no illusions regarding their maritime prowess (32), and later an anonymous writer in England was outspoken on the subject almost to the point of slander.

The spirit of speculation and gambling, called sport, is a far greater inducement to remain at shore ... While Britain looked on naval defence as her mainstay, Australians treated it as 'fancy sail' and Australians were seafaring people in the inverse ratio to their coastline (33).

Once again South Australians turned to the military for advice. The Freeling/Scratchley Report of 1866 (34) was the first received by the Colony from senior serving military officers, familiar with current military developments. Colonel Freeling possessed considerable local knowledge, while Major Scratchley was a fortifications expert. The report, for the first time, clearly defined the South Australian arc of defence; it extended for nine miles north from Marino. The Report also prepared South Australian public opinion to accept the principle of fixed defences. But in other respects the Freeling/Scratchley Report was no better than its predecessors. The recommendations were superficial and inaccurate. They omitted maintenance costs of recommended fortifications and equipment, and underestimated capital costs, omissions which the press was quick to notice (35). Consequently, little attention was paid to the report.



South Australians were then expecting a visit from Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Jervois,\* - it was not to eventuate for another ten years - and preferred to await his opinion before voting moneys for the coastal installations recommended by Freeling and Scratchley.

On 22nd January, 1876, shortly before Jervois' arrival, the Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, appointed yet another commission, composed of ex-military and ex-naval officers, to 'enquire into the best means of securing the Colony'. It became known as the Third Finnis Commission, and based its recommendations on the possibility of an enemy landing by some 500 troops, from three or four vessels, and the subsequent necessity to guard against destructive shelling of the port facilities. The coastline was to be protected by the erection of fixed defences, one at Point Malcolm and another at Largs Bay, while three gun boats were to provide floating defences. The Commission also recommended the construction of a military road. Should gunboats be unobtainable, then an additional fort was to be built near Glenelg. All posts were to be manned by a permanent artillery force. Unfortunately there were as many minority reports as there were members. The major points of disagreement concerned the gunboats and whether or not the force was to be paid. Biggs, the military commandant, advocated a large mobile force and as few fixed installations as possible. Others placed their trust in fixed defences. The government reacted with indifference to a report which was little more than a collection of personal opinions, hardly a justification for the expenditure of public funds.

If South Australians seemed to have no clear grasp of the strategic principles of their own defence, they could hardly

\* Later Lieutenant-General, Sir William Drummond Jervois, C.B., K.C.M.G. G.C.M.G., Governor of South Australia 1877-1833 and Governor of New Zealand 1883-1889.

be blamed. Contradictory reports of the various commissions conflicted with advice received from itinerant British officers and local experts. The concept of fixed coastal defences, with or without naval support, conflicted with proposals for mobile land forces. The proponents of fixed defences, sometimes referred to as the bricks and mortar school, had the advantage of precedents to show that attempts to conquer fortifications by purely naval means had generally proved futile in the past (37). South Australians also watched defence developments in the sister colonies, particularly in Victoria, where similar strategic views were held and where the concept of bricks and mortar was extended in 1866 to include blue water support. In 1866, the Victorian Legislative Assembly Committee on Colonial Defences recommended that a minister should be sent to London to discuss the procurement of a warship, and to obtain the services of an engineer officer to advise on the erection of fortifications. The minister was Sir Frederick Verdon. His mission caused one of the worst outbursts of jealousy ever exhibited by the South Australian press, once it became known that the sister colony might obtain a warship from Great Britain, at practically no cost. 'Iron-clads appear to be naturally distributed by Great Britain on the same principle as the poor rates and the education grant' (38). Victorian ministers were charged with wanting to become social dignitaries of England: 'A few months ago Mr. Verdon was a plain burgher of Williamstown, now he is a C.B. and a cosmopolitan celebrity', said the Observer(39).

Verdon's mission was very successful, particularly financially. The old armed steamer Victoria had earlier been made available to Great Britain for service in New Zealand, at a cost of about £25,000. Victoria was now prepared to cancel

this debt, provided that she was given something else. The Imperial Government agreed, and covered the colony's credit of £25,000 with £150,000 in Imperial money, which led to the purchase of H.M.C.S. Cerberus. The Observer, normally an objective newspaper, derided Verdon's obvious success.

If iron-clads and frigates can be got by the mere asking for, Mr. Verdon is likely to have many imitators. His mission has been such a success that it would be strange indeed if either New South Wales, Queensland, New Zealand or South Australia should not soon find it desirable to send a representative to Great Britain. They [the colonies] will practically derive no advantage, either from the presence of two war vessels in Hobson's Bay or from Mr. Verdon's title of Companion of the Bath (40).

Yet the paper must have been aware of the changes in Imperial naval policy, which were initiated by the Earl of Carnarvon, and which culminated in the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865.<sup>\*</sup> Soon the South Australian press was forced to admit that Verdon had been the right man at the right moment (41). Apart from securing the Cerberus, and a supply of small arms, he managed to persuade the British Government to send Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Jervois, the Inspector of Fortifications, to report on the defences of the Australian colonies. Major Peter W. Scratchley, with his knowledge of local conditions, was seconded to the mission to assist Jervois. It was felt, both in British Government circles and in Australia, that the advice of such competent officers would put Australia's defences on a sound footing. In exchange for the withdrawal of the physical means of protecting the colonies, Great Britain had undertaken to render every assistance to enable the colonies to protect themselves.

Lieutenant Colonel, later Lieutenant-General, Sir William Drummond Jervois was a military engineer with extensive

\* The Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865 will be discussed further in Chapter VI.

active and colonial service experience in Africa, England, India; the Mediterranean, and North America, and also as chief administrator (governor) of the Straits Settlements. He belonged to that breed of English soldier-administrators who combined an extremely sound scientific cum technological background - Jervois was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1888 - with a mind not clouded by precedent and prejudice, a combination which in the 19th century led men to the governorships of colonies and dominions.

Major, later Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley had the same academic background as Jervois, but he was rather more the technologist and scientist than statesman or administrator. He was a very successful military engineer and tactician, but did not particularly distinguish himself as the first administrator of New Guinea. His was the major contribution to the planning and implementation of South Australia's fixed defences. His enthusiasm and tact ensured maximum co-operation with local authorities (42). Jervois commented: 'It is indeed mainly due to his untiring zeal, combined with the exercise of great tact and discretion that so much has been done' (43).

Here, then, were two men, outstanding among their military contemporaries, men without prejudices or preconceived ideas. They saw clearly that defence was a federal rather than a colonial problem. Their advice had the strategic significance of swinging the balance of public opinion in favour of fixed defences, based on the assumption that the Royal Navy constituted the first line of defence and that large scale invasions were, therefore, unlikely.

The deliberations of Scratchley and Jervois resulted

in a Memorandum of Defence tabled in the house of assembly in December, 1877 (44). After giving a thorough description of the physical features of the coastal districts, Jervois proceeded to recommend the purchase and maintenance of a 'vessel of war superior in power to any hostile cruisers that would be likely to appear in these seas'. He rejected gun boats as not powerful enough, and also rejected the floating batteries proposed by E.J. Reed, one time chief-engineer of the Royal Navy (45). A war vessel, in Jervois' opinion, constituted the best defence, but the provision of certain fixed land defences was desirable 'to guard against the chance of the war vessel not being on the spot at the required moment ...'. He also advocated local mobile defences, because their presence 'would render the war vessel more readily available for general defence'. Clearly, Jervois believed in a predominantly maritime defence, and he thought of it in federal terms. He proposed two gun emplacements three-four miles apart near Semaphore, the placing of electro-contact torpedoes across the Port River, the construction of a military road as far south as Marino, and a force consisting of just under 1,000 men, practically as suggested by the Third Finniss Committee in the previous year (46). The capital costs of his proposals were £185,000 and the recurring annual costs of the order of £38,000.

The press was somewhat cautious. The efficacy of torpedoes was questioned; the capital costs were thought to be rather high. Since £25,000 was the maximum the Colony could afford to pay at that time, the naval side of the arrangement would have had to be dropped (47). However, the annual expenditure, if viewed in the light of an insurance policy, was considered reasonable, provided volunteers could be made to

serve effectively.

We do not know Scratchley's views on the proposals submitted by Jervois. His role was more that of the technical adviser. He was the first of the experts to apply engineering design principles to his task. The military engineer has

...not only to study the resources and necessities of the country to be defended but also to ascertain from the Government the amount that can be fairly expended for establishing and maintaining a system of defence ... organised with the resources available for the purpose at the lowest possible cost (48).

Consequently, his views differed somewhat from those expressed by Jervois. Iron-clads were too expensive and not proven. Small unarmoured gun boats were more economical and faster, but more vulnerable to small arms fire. Scratchley advocated fixed defence installations which, after the initial capital outlay, could be maintained quite cheaply with the minimum number of personnel. He advocated highly mobile volunteer forces, but not floating batteries which required a comparatively large personnel complement, unlike torpedo defences, which were initially inexpensive and could be operated with a minimum number of personnel (49).

The South Australian Government lost little time in implementing Jervois' military proposals. The Engineer-in-Chief made one of his senior officers, A.B. Moncrief, available to assist Scratchley and work on the construction of Fort Glanville began almost immediately. While the implications of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 did have a bearing on defence activities in South Australia at that time, it was not mere patriotism which caused the government to act more promptly on this occasion than it had done previously. The government had been under pressure for some time. In November, 1876, it had barely survived a no-confidence motion on the question of the volunteers, followed

by some very awkward questions concerning two 9-in. guns, obtained two years earlier, still lying in their packing cases at Port Adelaide (50). In August, 1877, the government had to face another no-confidence motion. J. Wigley, the Member for Light asserted that 'this Government was not justified in its apathetic and dilatory proceedings in defending the province' (51). Apathy disappeared and at least some of the recommendations of the Jervois report were implemented.

The net result was that the strategic frame of South Australia's defence was settled for the ensuing decade, and later variations were only shifts in emphasis on individual aspects. South Australia's defence was based on naval protection of the coastal waters, and on the protection of the Adelaide beaches by fixed defences, supported by a land force, whose task it was to prevent an enemy from out-flanking the fixed installations. Consequently, steps were taken to purchase a warship, to construct the fortifications at Glanville and Largs, and to reorganise the land forces so that they would be capable of fulfilling their aforementioned role. The blue water school had triumphed, ironically due to the efforts of military officers. Their opinions were generally confirmed, subsequently, by visiting high ranking naval officers, although certain differences did become apparent. Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon in 1886 disapproved of the forts (52). He recommended ships and more ships, suggesting that, in case of a bombardment, the inhabitants should retire out of range of hostile naval guns and let the enemy expend his ammunition. Meanwhile the local naval forces would appear on the scene and deal with the aggressor. Inhabitants, whose property was damaged by the bombardment should

then be compensated from a common fund established by the colonies for that purpose. A similar suggestion came from Brigadier General J.F. Owens, the military commandant at the time. In his opinion, any bombardment could only be of a short duration and should be accepted, with adequate arrangements for accommodating people out of range being provided.

Tryon's successor, Rear Admiral Sir John Fairfax, took a different view, one which was more popular in South Australia. He placed the emphasis on fortifications, rather than on purely naval protection, and strongly advocated the construction of the proposed fort at Glenelg (53).

It seems strange that the defence schemes of the late eighties should have been recommended solely by outsiders, with no apparent participation by South Australians. Perhaps the colonists were over-awed by the high-ranking British naval and military officers, or possibly, South Australians felt that the Jervois-Scratchley schemes should be given a chance to come to fruition, particularly since they were implemented with South Australian money, South Australian engineering resources and locally produced material. And it is understandable that local military authorities should have been reluctant to openly ignore the pearls of wisdom shed by visiting naval and military celebrities. Nevertheless, after due deliberation, the naval and military commandants in South Australia produced a memorandum (which soon found its way to the Colonial Office) in which, as early as 1887, they anticipated the move towards federation by considering all forms of defence, except the protection of sea-going commerce, as a federal task to be shared by all the colonies. This task would include the defence of naval stations and anchorages of potential strategic importance to an enemy.



The memorandum stated explicitly what Sir Edward Hutton\* was to emphasise fifteen years later: federally organised troops should be trained, both for local protection tasks, and for strategic purposes in the Pacific, wherever required not only by Australian, but also by Imperial interests (54). The colonists, however, evinced little interest in federal defence. What mattered was local defence, and since local defence should be mobile, there was a noticeable lay reaction against the brick and mortar school from 1887 onwards. Mobile defence was more appropriate to the citizen soldier. Fortifications and warships required professional expertise, to be found only among regular soldiers and regular soldiers were politically suspect. South Australian citizens decided to look into the matter themselves. Yet another commission was appointed, under the chairmanship of J.W. Castine in 1887.

The terms of reference for the Select Committee on Defence Forces showed that the professional military emphasis on fixed defences was not shared by the people's representatives. The Committee was to enquire into the war preparedness, the strength and means of command of the mobile forces in case of an emergency, and into means of popularising the mobile forces (55). The Castine Committee report indicated where the priorities lay: of 14 resolutions, only one made reference to fixed defences, by recommending 'that in order to complete the defences of Adelaide and its suburbs, plans be prepared for the proposed fort at Glenelg' (56). The divergence from professional military opinion forced the legislature to seek <sup>in 1888</sup> further explanation from

\* Vide Chapter XI, reference (2).

its naval and military commandants (57).

Commander John Walcott, the naval commandant, belonged to the brick and mortar and blue water school. In his opinion, the protection of Adelaide would be assured by three forts, with iron-clads as coastal defence to prevent an enemy from landing out of the range of the coastal guns. On the other hand, unless the armament at Glanville was modernised, the new fort at Glenelg would lose its effectiveness because over-lapping arcs of fire could not be guaranteed. Any other form of protection was completely unnecessary. It is interesting to note that Walcott made no suggestion for modernising and/or extending the naval forces of the Colony, as recommended by Tryon a year earlier. Perhaps he did not wish to influence the debate on the Australian Naval Agreement 1887, which, as we shall see in Chapter VIII, was interpreted in South Australia as a means of reducing the naval expenditure of the Colony. Ten years after the Jervois report, South Australia ceased to think in terms of blue water defence and the naval commandant concentrated on the bricks and mortar aspect of Jervois' defence philosophy. Walcott apparently disregarded the improvements in naval armament which would have enabled a hostile fleet to remain out of range of the forts, and to silence not only the forts themselves, but also to destroy the Protector.\*

In 1888, it was left to Major-General Downes, on his second tour of duty in South Australia as military commandant, and to the South Australian Government to knock the props from under the policy of fixed defences, which the former did on military considerations and the latter, on the basis of parish pump politics. The only system of fixed defences considered by Downes as at all effective would have had to extend south to

\* For discussion of South Australia's naval forces (H.M.C.S. Protector) see chapter VI.

Marino, would have had to be permanently manned and would have also required a mobile land force to fight an enemy who might have come ashore at night, or under cover of superior naval guns. Furthermore, the forts would have had to have sufficient armament to cover the coastal roads leading to the City. By virtue of their geographical position, Sydney and Melbourne could be made secure by fortifying the heads and the channels. The fortifications which existed in the Adelaide area could not guarantee this protection. South Australia had two alternatives: either the local navy had to be increased to include a number of modern ships on constant stand-by, or a sufficiently large, well armed and well trained citizen force had to be made available in the Adelaide area, supplemented by mobile field artillery and equipped with ordnance of the latest design. Downes reminded the parliamentarians that Admiral Aslanbegoff had been able, in 1882, to appear off Glenelg undetected. 'Had this been war, men not forts would then have been required.'

(58)

The end of the blue water cum brick and mortar school was also the end of public participation in deciding the strategic concepts of defence in South Australia. The era of expertise had begun, ushering in the federal concept of defence. In June, 1889, the premier indicated to his parliament that a high-ranking Imperial, Major-General Edwards, was shortly expected to examine South Australia's defences (59).

Major-General J. Bevan Edwards, C.B. General Officer Commanding in China and the Straits Settlements, arrived in South Australia on 13th August, 1889. He was accorded a guard of honour, stayed at Government House as the guest of the Governor, the Earl of Kintore, and made the usual social rounds, culminating

in a mayoral ball. He was very careful in his comments to the press, but stressed the main theme of his report: colonial defence forces and defence schemes were of little use, unless the colonies were militarily federated, and unless their legislation provided for one colony coming to the assistance of another, which only Queensland and South Australia could do at the time. He visited the forts and other installations and watched rifle practices. He inspected the South Australian police force, congratulating the Commissioner, J. Peterswald, on 'the remarkably fine body of men' paraded before him (60).

The inspection report was published in October, 1889 (61). Edwards discounted the necessity for a fort at Glenelg, recommended that the mobile force should include two batteries of field artillery and a company of engineers, and that the general military organisation should follow the lines adopted by Victoria and New South Wales whose forces he considered superior to South Australia's. He also suggested that uniforms in South Australia should be of a more uniform colour to discourage parochial attitudes, and he likewise recommended that the rifle clubs should be supported by the government.

Taken aback, parliament acted on only two of the recommendations, those concerned with the supply of uniforms and the organisation of the rifle clubs (62). The press was more perceptive. It agreed with Edwards that too much money had been wasted in the past on schemes which, by virtue of their colonial rather than federal orientation, were at best fragmentary. The Observer pointed out that, if a fort at Glenelg was considered unnecessary, were the other two forts not equally useless? Edwards disappointed many by making hardly any reference to naval defence. He was accused of prejudice against the

efficacy of the second and third lines of defence, the coastal naval force and the fortifications: 'He is bound to trust in soldiers rather than the naval and coast defences, and preparations for battles rather than safe-guard against attack' (63). The Observer apparently forgot that earlier proposals for defence were made by soldiers of the same corps to which Edwards belonged, but that the naval and fixed defences which Jervois and Scratchley advocated in 1870 had, a decade later, become both more expensive and less effective due to considerable advances in naval ordnance design.

The Edwards report brought about the first inter-colonial conference of military commandants, in November and December, 1889. Indirectly, it paved the way for the Local Defence Council, set up in 1895, for which the original idea had come from the Colonial Defence Committee in 1886 (64) and which had also been recommended by the Castine Committee in 1887 (65). The Council comprised the chief-secretary, the naval and military commandants, the commissioner of police, the engineer-in-chief and the surveyor-general. It held only two meetings during its lifetime, and delegated its functions to a smaller body, the Local Defence Committee, which, in turn, was responsible, in 1894, for the formulation of Marine Board Regulations in Time of War and for the submission to the government of a Defence Scheme of South Australia (66).

The scheme brought local defence thinking up to date clearly defining the respective responsibilities of naval and military authorities. The naval commandant was to be responsible for the signal and lookout stations and for the outer anchorage. The naval officer commanding the inner anchorage and the Port River was to be answerable to the naval command in matters

affecting rations, discipline and quarters, but operationally he would be under the control of the fortress district commander. The Colony was divided into five districts, the first of which, the Harbour Fortress District, consisted of Fort Largs, Fort Glanville, and the inner and outer anchorages, commanded by the officer-in-charge of artillery forces. The senior infantry officer was responsible for the second district, the Adelaide Littoral District, which consisted of the Grange, Middle and Glenelg sections, with head-quarters at Keswick camp. The Port Pirie and Wallaroo Districts had their headquarters in these towns. The last district was called the Movable Column. It was based in the South Parklands camp and constituted the mobile reserve and the South Australian component of an Australian federal brigade.

The scheme set the pattern which defence organisation in South Australia was to follow, essentially without alteration, for the next forty years. It was based on the technical fact that populated South Australian shore areas were now within the range of modern naval artillery fire from deep water. It implied that coastal defence was a military rather than a naval problem and that, although fixed defences might be outranged, they were still necessary to prevent transports from landing hostile raiding parties. It also implied that a mobile force was required, to oppose landings taking place out of range of the fixed defences, and to contribute to federal defence in case of large scale attacks elsewhere.

In the actual implementation of its defence schemes South Australia depended, in no small measure, on material assistance freely given by Great Britain, and was strongly influenced by changes and developments in British military doctrine.

#### 4.3 British Assistance and the Influence of Military Thought

As to heavy guns, the Home Government have met our frequent solicitations by a gift of trophies taken in the Crimean War; trophies which are now exhibited in the Botanic Gardens and which the Russians could once more easily appropriate in the present defenceless state of the Colony.

Observer, 1865 (70)

The sarcasm was directed at Britain's implied reluctance to assist the Colony in preparing her own defences, but in fact records show that, right through the century, Britain stood willing to do her utmost to satisfy the often considerable demands from her Colony.

British assistance and the influence of British military thought seem to fall into three distinct phases. Material assistance was readily given until the late sixties. Up to the early eighties, the change in military thinking in England, particularly as applied to tactics, made itself felt in the Colony, and from then onwards the first Colonial Defence Committee and its successors, the Carnarvon Commission, and the second Colonial Defence Committee, imparted what might be termed Imperial characteristics to the defence policy of the Colony.

#### British Material Assistance

Material assistance given by Great Britain to South Australia was in the form of small arms, rifles, swords and ordnance of various calibre, mainly for the mobile force. Occasionally the deliveries were free of charge, but usually the colonists had to pay for them. However, even when paying for equipment, the Colony derived considerable advantages from

dealing with England. In the first place the price was usually the best obtainable; England only charged cost plus freight. Secondly, the weapons were of current British service pattern, which meant that replacements, spare parts and ammunition were readily obtainable, and that the equipment and its employment was compatible with British army usage. Thirdly, Great Britain usually undertook to inspect the equipment prior to delivery.

In the fifties and sixties the colonists frequently complained of the British Government's supposed failure to assist them in equipping their forces. Sir Henry Young, in 1859, requested 2,000 Minnie rifles with accoutrements, 1,000 cavalry swords, and four field howitzers (two 6- and two 9-pounders), and the colonists were disappointed when the rifles were not sent, although both ordnance and swords were supplied free of charge (71). The colonists did not appreciate the fact that Minnie rifles were not on general issue because they were of an experimental pattern. However, Great Britain was prepared to, and in fact did, supply 2,000 Enfield rifles (72). Two years later, Sir Richard G. MacDonnell voiced the general disappointment at the alleged lack of encouragement for colonial self-reliance by pointing out that 'unless the rifles are of a really good description, it will be impossible to get an eligible class of the community to serve in a volunteer rifle or light infantry corps' (73). The complaints probably stemmed from the fact that the colonists were only vaguely aware of the sort of equipment required, without any knowledge of the detailed characteristics of the weapons they wanted. This was understandable. The Colony's only defence experts were half-pay infantry officers, out of touch with ordnance and small arms developments, thus the Colony was dependent on Great Britain,



both for advice and for the supply of defence equipment.

In the early sixties, England went out of her way to help the Colony. When South Australia made half a million rounds of ammunition and 400 rifles available to Sir William Dennison for use in New Zealand, Great Britain immediately sent the requested replacements (74). Actually, England sent enough rifles to equip a full battalion. By the end of 1860, British supplies had given South Australia an armoury of 2,600 rifles, plus an ammunition reserve of some 600 rounds per rifle (75). Gradually South Australian demands for small arms began to appear a little unreasonable, especially considering the strength of the volunteer movement (76), and Britain became somewhat reluctant to oblige. Her attitude had a salutary effect on the South Australian Government: there was talk of prohibiting the export of arms, ammunition and gunpowder and of manufacturing ball ammunition in the Colony (77).

South Australia in the sixties must have been quite a source of irritation to the British Government. Edward Cardwell, who succeeded the Duke of Newcastle as Secretary-of-State for the Colonies in 1864, was almost constantly pestered by requests for assistance of one kind or another, particularly for the services of qualified instructors and advisers. But on some occasions, having asked for the expert (78), South Australians would be assailed by doubts (79) (80) as to the real need for his presence, and whether and how they would act on his advice, or how many artillery instructors were required (81). The Earl of Carnarvon, Cardwell's successor, politely advised South Australia in 1866 (82) that the British Government was prepared to do everything possible, but it was for the colonists themselves to make up their minds as to what they wanted, and incidentally drew attention to an earlier direction, which

required pre-payment for any hardware obtained from English ordnance stores (83).

Neither material assistance, nor the presence of individual instructors, affected South Australian defence planning to any great extent. However, changes in military doctrine, both in Britain and elsewhere, did have considerable influence on the shaping of the Colony's defence policies.

#### Influence of Overseas Military Doctrine

What had been official British military doctrine during the Napoleonic wars, remained basically unchanged, even after the Crimean War. After all, the British army remained the custodian of a vast economic empire and the 'policemen of unruly industrial districts at home' (84). Besides, the regiments spent ten years abroad for every five years served in England. Therefore, manoeuvres to develop new tactical doctrines were scarcely feasible, and only became accepted practice after the implementation of the Cardwell reforms.

But in South Australia, almost from the very beginning, there was a discernable approach, an attitude, very different from the Brown-Bess tactics. Brown-Bess tactics were, in the sixties or even as late as in the middle seventies, still considered quite adequate by the British professional military. These tactics simply called for volley firing, at short range, from a square or column formation, and had proved quite successful in punitive armed clashes with native tribes, or with demonstrating Englishmen. South Australia's attitude involved a realisation that the red square was proving ineffective vis-a-vis modern fire arms, and that rigidity of formation must give way to the more flexible employment of troops, both in the open or under cover. These new tactics were referred to as skirmishing.

The very first defence commissions had shown that conventional British military thought was not favoured in South Australia. In fact, it was not until the arrival of the professionals, Downes and Owen,<sup>\*</sup> that official British military doctrine gained some recognition, though never to the extent of changing the general tactical character of the South Australian forces. Their training was directed towards light infantry work, firing under field conditions. The South Australian military always had an aversion to parade-ground drill. Thus, in 1858, the Second Finnis Committee recommended that military training was to be concerned primarily with the 'use of the rifle in action and knowledge of light company and skirmishing drill' (85), while evidence given before the First Hart Commission a few months later stressed an even further need for a tactical doctrine quite different from Britain's own (86). At that time some experienced British line officers on half-pay like Captain C.H. Bagot, Member for Light, realised the unsuitability of traditional British training practices. Captain Bagot's experience in the Maharatta Wars had taught him that the colonial force did not require parade-ground drill, but should be proficient 'in natural things', that is, in marksmanship and 'skirmishing in open order'.

The question must inevitably be asked, why were South Australians deliberately turning their backs on established British military training practice and doctrine? Perhaps because little could have been learned from Britain at that time. The only lessons learned by Britain in the Crimean War appear to have been in the areas of organisation, logistics and command structure. A British military writer contended that the nature of the campaign in the Crimea, reminiscent as it was of the

\* Vide chapter V. Lieutenant-Colonel M.F. Downes arrived in 1878 and Brigadier-General J.F. Owen in 1885.

Peninsular War in a number of respects, did little to stimulate serious thought within the army about its role and tactics.

'Haunted by the ghost of Wellington, the Army ignored, in the years that followed the war, its two key tactical innovations - field entrenchments and rifle power' (87). These innovations were not known in Australia. There were few soldiers in the Colony who had actually fought in the Crimea. As for the American Civil War, with its many similarities, it was just beginning, and after it was over, only Jervois was to have first-hand knowledge, but he never spoke of tactics.

Perhaps South Australia was influenced by the views of the only reasonably senior British military officer serving in Australia on secondment to Victoria in the late sixties, Major P.H. Scratchley, whose views on tactics were in advance of current British military doctrine. He believed in the use of field works, such as trenches and strong points, to serve as a firm base for mobile operations, rather than as a means of fixed defence. He recommended, after the Turkish practice, the use of mules and horses to bring up reinforcements, entrenching tools and engineer stores. He believed in the construction - by the infantry - of obstacles such as mines and wire entanglements; he also stressed the necessity for adequate communications (88). However, there is no evidence that during his four year tour of duty, he discussed his ideas with any of his South Australian contemporaries.

Perhaps the answer to South Australia's independent approach to military training was to be found in Captain C.H. Bagot's concept of the citizen soldier (89). The very notion of the citizen soldier, whether militia or volunteer, seems to imply a form of training governed by priorities, which range

from that which is essential for the soldier to know, namely field craft and weapon proficiency, to what would be a desirable attribute, namely, parade-ground drill. In a professional army, held together by fear of the lash, taught marching to the front, and whose only tactical instruction was 'Fix bayonets! Fire a volley! Prepare to charge! Charge! 'reliance on field works and dispersions was considered injurious to discipline and elan (90). In an army composed of citizen soldiers, field craft and weapon proficiency were considered to be of the utmost importance, and emphasis on formal parade ground drill, as stressed by the British professionals, was considered the enemy of true discipline. The colonial amateurs appeared to be fully aware of tactical lessons, learnt during the revolutionary wars in America and on the Continent, which the professionals had either forgotten, or chose to ignore, for political reasons.

The citizen soldiers in South Australia were dissatisfied with their uniforms, which had been designed on British patterns and, although appropriate for formal drill and red square tactics, proved too conspicuous in the bush and totally unsuitable for the climate (91). Nor did the citizen soldiers subscribe to Wellington's dictum, that officers should be gentlemen first and soldiers second, hence the need for trained officers to control a volunteer army, and the persistent demand for competitive examinations as the criterion for first commissioned appointments and officer promotions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the progress of the Cardwell reforms was closely watched by the colonists (92).

Two events convinced the citizen soldiers of South Australia that their general approach to military training was correct: the American Civil War, 1861-1865, and the British defeat at Majuba Hill in 1880. The Civil War brought into

focus the importance of mounted infantry. It is possible, although the writer has no evidence of this, that South Australians were aware of Sir Henry Havelock's analysis of the role of cavalry armed with modern, long range, breach-loading rifles. He offered a choice between the -

jaunty, smart, burnished, well set-up hussar, armed with his yard of blunt carving knife and that still more gorgeous anachronism borrowed from the Middle Ages, the British lancer, armed with his flag and pole ... or the destroying power of a horseman, armed with a breach-loader carrying 1,000 yards ... of whom you can see nothing but the quick flashes of his rifle as he lies behind cover, whilst his horse is carefully sheltered by a mounted comrade 200 - 300 yards behind, yet instantly available to carry him out at speed to a new position by flanking fire (93).

South Australian citizen soldiers had always been in favour of mounted infantry but that idea was only very reluctantly accepted by their British commandants. The conventional British idea of the role of the cavalry persisted, despite the fact that some of the most spectacular cavalry charges during the Franco-Prussian War, including Mars-la-Tour, were failures.

The writings of Canadian militia captain, A.T. Denison, were known to South Australians (94) and possibly played their part in influencing Australian military thought. Denison had shown that mounted infantry was superior to ordinary cavalry, particularly when armed with breach loading carbines and operated as a squadron rather than as a regiment, with far greater manoeuvrability, particularly over open ground (95). Closer to home, General Hutton of New South Wales felt that the role of the Australian mounted rifles most closely approached the tactics used so successfully by the Boers, particularly over long distances (96) while the Victorian commandant, Sir Charles Helled-Smith, put his preferences even more bluntly:

ordinary cavalry had to face too many obstacles in Australia. He claimed that the employment of large bodies of <sup>mounted</sup> infantry in South Africa had been one of the major factors leading to the British defeats at the hands of the Boers (97).

Despite official reluctance, public pressure, and the recommendations of the Colonial Defence Committee, forced the government's hand. Although mounted troops had been in existence in South Australia for some time, the mounted infantry was not formally constituted till 1887, and then only as part of the unpaid volunteer force, rather than of the paid militia. The fitting out of mounted troops was a costly business, about £20 per man, exclusive of the cost of the horse. The government was naturally reluctant to pay for a force which could just as effectively be established on a voluntary basis because it was popular, particularly among well-to-do citizens, doubtless not for military reasons alone: the glittering uniforms must have had something to do with it (98).

The Transvaal War was closely followed by the South Australian press; there were lessons to be learnt. Conditions in South Africa closely resembled what might have happened in Australia: a well-trained professional army, fighting more or less loosely organised citizen soldiery. Great prominence was given to a speech by General Roberts in the Guild Hall, London, 1881, where he stressed the superiority of the citizen soldier, highly proficient in marksmanship over long ranges, and capable of taking every advantage, offered by the natural cover of a terrain with which he was thoroughly familiar (99).

Not everyone accepted parallels between South Africa and South Australia. In South Australia, General Downes disagreed (100), and pointed out the differences in terrain between the Transvaal and the coastal plains near Adelaide (101).

But even Downes, though disagreeing in principle, accepted changes in tactical doctrine. From the early eighties onwards, his field exercises usually took the form of an approach to contact through hostile country, with pockets of enemy troops. Progress, and ultimate victory, depended on skirmishing tactics (102).

Proficiency in skirmishing meant a combination of marksmanship and field craft. Traditional British training in musketry fell far short of the tactical requirements of the day. During the Sudan war (1885) the Observer pointed out, gleefully, that 'there was evidence of Arabs being first-rate marksmen who, like the Boers, had never seen the manual of the Hythe practice' (103). From the eighties onwards, the South Australian Government refused to subsidise rifle clubs - they did not train skirmishers (104).

Overseas military experience had successfully swayed public opinion in favour of a citizen soldiery, trained on more or less informal lines, but proficient in marksmanship in the field, highly mobile, and capable of taking advantage of natural cover. It remained for the Colonial Defence Committee to influence formal organisation and administration of the forces.

#### The Influence of the Colonial Defence Committee

Until the late seventies, military advice to the colonies had been sporadic. Officers of the Royal Navy, or visiting generals, had been consulted, in an almost private capacity. Reports furnished by Jervois or Scratchley were not made in an Imperial context and, in most cases, only with the blessings of the Colonial Office, without reference either to the War Office, or to the British Government as a whole. Again, the advice was, at best, semi-official. Conversely,



the British Government had no established machinery for obtaining co-ordinated information about the state of colonial defences. By the late seventies, the need for a governmental co-ordinating agency had become quite pressing.

1878 saw the birth of the first Colonial Defence Committee (C.D.C.). It consisted of officials from the Treasury, the Admiralty, the War Office and the Colonial Office, and its chief concern was the defence of coaling stations and maritime commerce. Jervois had been in touch with the Committee when he visited Britain in 1878 but the C.D.C. showed little interest in South Australia (105), other than to convey the official naval policy laid down by the Admiralty: that the Royal Navy would always protect ports of strategic significance, but could not detach individual ships from the respective squadrons. The colonists must provide their own naval coast and port defences. The Admiralty would be prepared to supervise the building of any ships, and would make personnel available from the retired list (106). But, the colonies were told in no uncertain manner, the Royal Navy would always remain fully at the disposal of the British Government (107).

From 1885 onwards, the C.D.C. exercised a considerable influence on colonial defence, both through the local defence committees and through its comments on the annual colonial defence returns. The C.D.C. was thus able to make recommendations for the composition of local committees, the organisation of the local command structure, and the assessment of local defence resources, as well as arrangements for submarine defences and for the safety of the local population (108). For instance, it was the C.D.C. which suggested the changes in the South Australian command structure, reported in the Defence Scheme of South Australia (109). Similarly, on

reviewing the naval commandant's annual report for the year 1893, the C.D.C. suggested a change in the armament of H.M.C.S. Protector,\* as well as recommending certain changes in guns for the Port River area, and searchlights for the forts (110).

The South Australian Government did not always heed the Committee's advice. For instance, the reappointment of Major General Downes to his second tour of duty in the Colony was, unsuccessfully, opposed by the secretary of the Committee, who considered that the revolution in both armament design and in tactics was such, 'that the old fossils were hopelessly behind', and that it would be far better to appoint a competent officer from England than 'paying an officer while he is learning his trade' (111).

The C.D.C. was quite independent of the official views expressed by other senior British officers. For instance, the C.D.C. disagreed with some of the recommendations made by General Edwards. The Committee did not consider a force of 30,000 to 40,000 men, concentrated against territorial aggression, necessary, because aggression on such a scale was considered most unlikely in the light of Australia's distance from potential aggressors and the logistic support which would have been required by the enemy. The C.D.C. recommended that highly mobile, smaller defence forces should be available for instant mobilisation in the threatened coastal districts. The Committee also made the point that forces should not necessarily be restricted to passive defensive warfare, but should be capable of mounting an offensive against any point in Australia's vicinity which could become the basis of hostile action against the whole continent (112).

On occasion, the C.D.C. was asked to give its approval to direct requests from the Colony. An example was South

\*Vide chapter VI.

Australia's request for the granting of the title Royal to its permanent artillery. Major Nelson, the secretary of the C.D.C. advised the Colonial Office that according to the latest returns (1898) South Australia's permanent artillery totalled some twenty-five N.C.O.'s and men and he did not know 'under what pretext this could be termed a regiment' (113). There were other areas in which South Australia's defence effort had failed to impress the War Office, and the Colony's requests had to be refused; but these matters were dealt with very gently, almost informally, and the refusals couched in terms which would not hurt anyone (114).

The influence of the C.D.C. was not spectacular, but it made itself felt in a number of ways. The Committee advised mainly on technical matters, and on matters of policy which could have Imperial significance. It also acquired a thorough understanding of colonial defence problems (for instance, the raising of unpaid volunteer units was not regarded as being in the best interests of colonial defence) without interfering in the domestic problems of the Colony. Thus, the controversy regarding payment or non-payment of citizen soldiers, was an issue left to the Colony to work out for herself.

On the whole, it may be said that in matters of strategy and tactical doctrine the defence policy of South Australia was shaped by external factors. The question of the type of force best suited to protect the Colony was an internal problem, and apart from some gentle guidance by the C.D.C., the problem was left to the colonists to solve. In anticipation of a possible threat, they fought each other with theories for the best part of a century.

#### 4.4 Emergence of a Colonial Defence Policy

The development of South Australia's defence policy followed a torturous course and exhibited so many stops and starts that one could be inclined to deduce that there was no coherent development but rather a picture of continuous changes and varying premises. Yet, the evidence indicates that the numerous parliamentary inquiries and recommendations by local and Imperial naval and military authorities appeared to set a series of self-contained patterns which evolved from one to the other as the century progressed. These patterns reflected the Colony's attitude to Empire, her fears of aggression, her appreciations of possible attacks and the kinds of defence measures thought necessary and eventually implemented.

In the eighteen hundred fifties and early sixties South Australia as a self-governing Colony, took membership of Empire for granted. Europe was far away and conflagrations there which might involve England, were not thought likely to have an appreciable effect on the Colony. England protected her off-spring on sea - the Royal Navy ruled the waves, and on land - the British army was the most effective in the world, at least, so the colonists thought, until the end of the fifties.

In the early sixties winds of change were felt in the Colony. Great Britain began to insist on colonial military self-reliance because she intended to withdraw her garrisons. The colonists took notice. In any case, their belief in the military might of England had been somewhat shattered by the poor showing of Imperial troops in New Zealand. The Colony's awareness of the need to be self-reliant was further strengthened by the concern over French activities in the Pacific and vague fears of acts of aggression by American or Russian naval units.

The colonists had no clear conception what forms these attacks would take. While the possibility of even a temporary military occupation of any part of the Colony was never seriously considered, naval attacks were thought likely, either by fleet action followed by temporary landings of raiding parties or by naval raids of single ships. The best means of countering such threats were, therefore, a well-trained citizen force sufficiently mobile to meet enemy raiding parties anywhere along the coastline. Although some thought was given to fixed defences for protecting the entrance to the Port River, no concrete steps were taken to erect permanent fortifications.

In the late sixties and seventies South Australia's attitude towards Empire changed rather drastically. There was no longer any doubt about Britain's military presence in the Australian colonies: by 1870 England had withdrawn her garrisons. At the same time, the emergence of strong European powers and resultant possibility of sustained British involvement necessitating the concentration of her resources in Europe, made the colonists doubt the wisdom of close connection with the Empire. They realised that this situation, aggravated by the emergence of Russia as the most likely threat to their safety, called for defence preparedness of a high degree.

In the eyes of the colonists the pattern of the possible threat to their safety had not materially changed from the previous period: while the Royal Navy would always protect the first line of defence, the sea communications, the temporary landing of raiding parties from one or, at most, a few hostile naval units was still thought possible. The colonists had also become aware that the second line of defence, the pro-

tection of coastal waters, was no longer secure. Britain had made it clear that Royal Navy units would no longer be available for this purpose, and, consequently, the colonies would have to protect the approaches to their shores themselves. To enable the colonies to do so, she had passed the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865. The colonists also realised that developments in ordnance and in tactics called for more sophisticated counter-measures and a higher degree of training than was previously thought necessary. Although they began to lean towards the concept of fixed defences based on the employment of powerful coastal artillery, the major emphasis was still on mobile defences manned by well-trained citizen soldiers, versed not only in marksmanship but also proficient in fire and movement.

The eighties witnessed a change in Empire relations. England began to see the colonies as an asset rather than as a liability and began to encourage them to participate in Empire defence. The colonies also changed their attitude to Empire: they began to identify themselves as members of the British family and felt that a nation at war with England would also be at war with themselves. They had, by that time, firmly adopted the principle of defence by self-reliance within the Empire.

Thus the growing threat of Russia to India made South Australia hasten her defence preparedness. In the first instance, the Colony <sup>was to</sup> secure her third line of defence, the protection of the vital littoral districts, and, subsequently to establish her second line of defence, the protection of the South Australian coastal waters. Consequently, the Colony erected coastal fortifications and established a naval force.

The emphasis on fortifications and complex defence equipment necessitated the raising of highly skilled permanent defence personnel. At the same time, the possibility of enemy landings, however small, out of range of the coastal fortifications was considered a distinct possibility, which, in turn, required an even higher degree of discipline and skill on the part of the mobile forces. In other words, there was no longer a place for the amateur citizen soldier, only interested in rifle shooting as a sport.

In the middle eighties and early nineties the bonds with Empire had become firmly established and defence of Empire had become an accepted obligation on the part of the colonies, so much so that some of the colonies were prepared to contribute to the defence of Empire beyond their own shores. The Russian threat had receded, but the emergence of Germany, both as a European and a Pacific power, caused concern in the Australian colonies. Their military planners foresaw the possibility of colonial forces acting on a federal basis in the Pacific and, perhaps, even elsewhere in the interests of Empire defence.

At the same time developments in naval architecture and naval ordnance had accelerated the obsolescence of South Australia's second and third line of defence, which, moreover were increasingly costly to maintain. Consequently, the defence effort shifted towards mobile defences, manned, primarily, by citizen soldiers organised on a uniform basis, which could readily be placed into a federal system.

CHAPTER VSOUTH AUSTRALIA'S ARMY

The true military strength of a nation consists not in actual amount of arms and ammunition and in heavy fortifications ... but in the numbers, courage ... and patriotism of its inhabitants. Especially is this the case with the Colony of South Australia depending entirely on its own strength ...

Register, 1855 (1)

Patriotism is [so] latent that it requires a near approach to danger to make it show itself and then as is always the case, there would be a vast amount of spirit coupled with a great want of skill.

Letter to the Observer,  
1863 (2)

Power should be obtained for retaining men for a fixed period of service for continuous training in daylight during a number of days during the year, besides a certain number of drills at detached periods, for permanent embodiment during war, for the strict enforcement of discipline, for the appointment of officers only after passing proper examinations.

Observer, 1878 (3)

When war is near and danger high  
God and Volunteers is the cry,  
When war is over and things are righted,  
God's forgot and the volunteer is slighted.

Lieutenant Clement at the  
Gawler Arms Hotel, 1865 (4)

One pound the Government will pay  
to every volunteer,  
That he may have a winding sheet  
when he should so appear.

And every man will have each month  
of rounds of cartridge ten,  
So little practice it is thought  
will make good riflemen.

No funds, no cloth are there to give  
the men who serve three years,  
They will be known as 'Nature's Own',  
the naked volunteers.

Satirist in Observer,  
1859 (5)



The implementation of defence policies and recommendations into a military organisation suitable to the Colony of South Australia is a story of confusion which took forty years to crystallise into a coherent picture. It is a tale of continuous legislative wranglings, lapsed acts, amending bills, debates about comparatively unimportant privileges and status. The history of the South Australian army abounds with changing nomenclature, a phenomenon implicit in the different permutations of the citizen soldier concept.

From the outset, then, a few simple distinctions must be made. The difference between the permanent military forces established in 1888 and the non-permanent forces raised from 1854 onwards, is, essentially, like the difference between a citizen soldiery and a regular army. Everybody in South Australia clearly understood what a regular army was and what it was called upon to do, but difficulties arose when it came to appreciate the nature and functions of citizen soldiers.

Anyone acquainted with Australian history will readily appreciate controversies concerning volunteer units based on ethnic groups, or cadet units raised in schools, or rifle clubs with varying degrees of affiliation with the military structure. Less easy to follow were the distinctions in different periods within the volunteer movement between those units which received pay and those which did not, between those that wished to elect their officers and those that did not, between those whose discipline could become subject to the British Army Acts and those that tried to avoid it, between those that were justly proud of their military discipline and those that objected to it.

It is exceedingly difficult to understand the development of the South Australian army when the distinction between the militia and volunteer features becomes blurred. However, irrespective of the form the citizen soldiery took, there lay behind it the recourse to compulsory enrolment, recruiting and training which the Adelphi planners had contemplated and which emerged in full legislative form at the end of the nineteenth century. This thread is clearly noticeable with the passing of the Militia Act of 1854, an act which was designed to put the concept of universal training on a firm legal basis.

The Militia Act of 1854 or to give it its full title, An Act to Organise and Establish a Militia Force in South Australia (6) was based on the recommendations of the First Finniss Commission of 1854. The preamble to the Act explained its purpose: it was to serve as a backstop in case insufficient volunteers came forward to enroll in the volunteer force, authorised under a separate act (7).

The Militia Act provided for the compulsory enrolment of all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 46 years, except members of the legislature, the judiciary, the clergy, the police force, the merchant navy and certain other people such as half-pay officers, aborigines and those members of the public who had already served a term of military duty, either personally or by substitute. Militia liability was three years. The total number to be drafted was not to exceed 2,000, including those who may have enrolled under the Volunteer Act. (8) The country was to be divided into militia districts. The police had the task of preparing returns of eligible persons in the district, and balloting

was to be carried out by the justices of the peace who were also empowered to hear appeals. Each district was to be allocated a quota. Where the quota was surpassed the excess was to be balloted out. Where the reverse was the case, or where normal wastage had reduced the quota, additional persons were to be balloted in. Officers were to rank within the general service in order of date of commission. Rates of pay varied from £2 for a full colonel, to 5/- per day for a drummer, and every officer of field rank had to be horsed. Courts-martial were to consist of militia officers only, and the whole force, or any part, could not be called out for more than 28 days in every year, unless there was an actual invasion or threat of invasion. The force was allowed to serve in South Australia only. This very comprehensive act - it had no less than 103 clauses - served as a model for all succeeding militia acts.

From the outset the response of many colonists was at variance with the officially stated objectives of the legislation. Some believed that a militia might establish political autonomy, and lead to the severance of the ties with England. Certain sections of the community objected on purely personal grounds. For instance, churchgoers feared that ministers of religion might be conscripted, although Clause 7 of the Act made it quite clear that this would not be the case. Others objected to the possibility of publicans becoming officers. The pastoralists were afraid that they might lose their shepherds. (9) Furthermore, the whole idea of substitution was anathema to many South Australians. A letter to the Observer claimed that if the militia was embodied, it would consist mainly of working class people, because a high number of substitutes had to be expected. Yet these were the people who had least to fight for. The writer

demanded that the whole population should be compelled to bear an equal share of the burden, and besides, 'an armed population never has been and never will be conquered' (10). There were further objections to substitution. Although some members of the government regarded 'a volunteer force ... [as] nothing more than playing at soldiers ...' (11), Captain C.H. Bagot made an impassioned speech in the legislative council, extolling military service as the primary duty of every citizen who, unless he had undergone his service, should have no right to vote (12). A letter to the Observer was quoted during the debate, 'Mark ye, Sir, no exemption - let wealth and poverty join shoulder to shoulder ...' (13). However the government did not remove the 'substitute' clauses. In all, the arguments were no less heated for the fact that the external danger, the Crimean War, which prompted the passing of the militia legislation had practically disappeared by the time the Act was assented to (14), and the militia was not actually embodied. Only one of the provisions of the militia legislation, the furnishing of returns from proclaimed districts, was in fact enforced for several years, not so much with any actual intention of calling out the force, but rather to estimate the military potential in the Colony, and at the same time to encourage volunteering by threat of compulsion. As a result numerous volunteer companies were formed because, once a volunteer, a man ceased to be liable for compulsory service. The militia proclamation was published in January, 1860, and a month later some 650 volunteers had enrolled in 14 different rifle corps (15).

Despite the encouragements given to the volunteer movement in the early sixties, mainly in order to avoid the

implementation of the militia Act, by 1863 or 1864 people in South Australia felt that all was not well with their state of defence. Imperial troops had not been seen in the Colony for some time. The volunteer service had been tried twice between 1854 and 1864 and had been found wanting. Was it perhaps necessary, after all, to implement universal service?

In 1866 public opinion on the question of militia service was tested at meetings in Adelaide and in Port Adelaide. Both meetings resolved upon the removal of the substitute clause and both meetings petitioned the government to implement the Militia Act. The resolutions of the Adelaide Town Hall meeting actually resembled a system then practised in Canada: the Canadian militia was called out once a year, for one day, and from this muster 2,000 volunteers were drawn to undergo two months training at military establishments at Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Quebec (16).

Thereafter, the question of implementing the Militia Act was raised whenever there was a general outcry against the lack of interest and support shown by the wealthier colonists (17). The argument against the implementation of the Act centred on the fact that the Colony would lose the services of volunteers because they were exempt from militia obligations. Nobody seriously quarrelled with the militia principle, but there was a reluctance to take such a drastic step, mainly because it would have meant the failure of the voluntary principle, itself an article of faith in South Australia. That the volunteer army's efficiency would not have borne examination, and that 'possibly a number of old ladies dressed up in sea jackets would be of quite as much service as a volunteer force' (18) was not regarded as being relevant.

In a sense the threat of compulsion was thought to stimulate volunteer movements.

So, the militia legislation remained on the statutes as a vis in terrorem, awaiting yet another revision. In 1886, following a report by the commandant, Brigadier General J.F. Owen (19), the Government of South Australia introduced the Military Forces Amendment Act (20) which retained the Reserve Militia as the compulsory component of the South Australian army. The provisions were very much the same as those of the 1854 and 1859 acts, and retained the substitute clause (21). The Act did little to encourage enrolment in the Active Militia (non-compulsory) force. A year or two later there were renewed demands to invoke the compulsory clauses of the Act. The proponents of compulsory service based their argument on a report submitted to parliament in 1888 by General Downes, who claimed that the volunteer force was very costly, inefficient, and unreliable, with a very high wastage rate. Downes recommended three years' compulsory service, on a ballot basis, for all men between the ages of 20 and 24, residing in the Adelaide district. In this way, assuming an annual intake of 1,000 men, the Colony would, after three years, have a force of 3,000 men under arms, with a reliable reserve of 5,000 men.

The idea of compulsory service was supported by the radicals in the Colony right from the beginning of the Colony as a self-governing society. It was a credo of faith inherited from the Adelphi planners, as evidenced by the opening quotation to this work.

As the colonial society prospered, the radicals clamoured for the implementation of compulsory service, because the propertied classes should not expect the existing force, composed mainly of working men, to protect the interests of

people who had more to lose than the defenders (22). However, the only concession the government made to the radicals was to pass a new act, entitled the Defence Forces Act Amendment Act, 1890 (23), which repealed the substitute provisions of the principal act (24). Of this the press approved, but it considered the provision which required Quakers to pay a cash equivalent, as tyranny and an example of religious persecution (25).

The depression of the early nineties had heightened class feeling. There was some fear that the military might be used against the working class, as had happened in Victoria. The unpaid volunteer force, the citadel of the propertied classes, could conceivably have come into conflict with the paid militia, with both forces shooting at the population at large.\* Fortunately, the fear proved groundless. The question of compulsory service was last raised in South Australia in 1895, when the Premier, C.C. Kingston, introduced a most comprehensive defence bill, prepared by the commandant of the day, Colonel Joseph Maria Gordon. The bill was probably the most prolonged defence legislation ever debated in South Australia. It was introduced early in July, 1895, and not assented to till just before Christmas that year. The Premier called it a consolidation bill, it repealed six existing acts (26), and when it did become The Defences Act, 1895 (27), it established the principle that the citizen soldiery was to be complementary to the permanent army, a principle which exists to this day. The Act gave the impression that all military service was to be compulsory, and only one clause, Clause 17, provided for voluntary

\* Both components could become, by proclamation, subject to the provisions of the Mutiny Acts.

enrolment. Kingston did not hide the essentially compulsory nature of the Act. It gave the government the power to ensure that the defence burden was equally shared, for instance, servants could not be dismissed for joining the force.

Although the legislature sought to deprive the bill of some of its sting, by inserting into Clause 11 the provision that compulsory enrolment could only be enforced in case of actual or imminent invasion, to be proclaimed as such, the bill remained essentially as Colonel Gordon had prepared it. The force was to be composed, not of unpaid volunteers, or paid militia men, or a combination of both, but of paid citizen soldiers, enrolled for two years in the active force and then transferred for a further five years to a reserve force. The previous unpaid, purely voluntary elements in the force were relegated to Defence Rifle Clubs and the South Australian National Rifle Association.

The Act had certain territorial limitations. The force could only be employed in Australia or Tasmania. Under the provisions of earlier legislation, the paid militia men could be forced to serve in New Zealand, while unpaid volunteers could not be compelled to serve beyond the boundaries of the Colony. Under the 1895 Act such division of the forces was no longer possible.

The reaction, from the legislature, was one of approval (28), although there were dissenting voices. Some members saw the bill as a political move to curb the power of the moneyed classes, and others saw in the servant provision a threat to employment: an employer might not engage a man if he knew that the prospective servant was likely to be called up. Two labour members, Moule and Batchelor, wanted the compulsory clauses to apply to the electors of the legislative



Council only, while others lamented that the compulsory element of the Act was un-English and smacked of Continental militarism; after all, the purely voluntary system had not yet been proved inadequate. Kingston dismissed the latter argument by quoting the experience of the Battle at Bull Run, where volunteers were severely defeated by well-trained and disciplined troops (28). As for the press, the only objections concerned application rather than principle. For instance, there seemed to be too great a discrepancy between the horse allowance for officers in the Mounted Rifles and for their troopers. But apart from such minor matters, it was felt that the Colony, for the first time, had a defence machinery which promised to create an efficient force.

Gordon, the architect of The Defences Act, 1895, saw it as a fore-runner or even as a blue-print of future Australian defence legislation (29). In his view the main objective of the present legislation was to overcome the fragmentation of defence effort and to provide for a system, not only compatible within Australia, but also within the framework of British defence relations. Gordon implied that Australian defence should not be passive, that is, should not be waiting for an aggressor, but rather should play an Imperial role. As a matter of fact, and this point will be discussed in detail later on, in passing the act, South Australia was influenced by the 1894 conference of the Australian military commandants. Although Queensland had pioneered the idea of compulsory military service in its 1884 act, the 1895 South Australian act was the first successful attempt in Australia to establish the concept of the citizen soldier, that is, a citizen who could be compulsorily enlisted in times of danger, even if he declined to serve as a paid volunteer in times of peace (30).

## 5.2

The Volunteer Movement, 1854-1901

Five years after the establishment of the volunteer movement in South Australia in 1854 Queen Victoria authorised the formation of volunteer bodies in England (31). Supporters of the volunteer movement in South Australia were fond of pointing to a similarity of conditions in England. Yet there were fundamental differences.

In England the volunteers were considered as an auxiliary force, created to supplement the regular army. In South Australia, till 1895 at least, the volunteers were the first line of military defence, to be supplemented in an emergency by embodying the militia or by raising semi-permanent bodies, like the South Australian Guard. In England, too, the volunteers represented a class of people which had but recently assumed a distinct identity in a society with a much wider social spectrum than the relative uniformity to be found among South Australian colonists. Punch showed the militia men always 'undersized, cleanshaven boys of somewhat tough countenance; the volunteers were always middle-aged, bewhiskered and obviously the height of Victorian respectability' (32). The volunteer movement in England was a facet of a class conflict which ended in victory for the middle classes. It was bound to be popular. In South Australia, there was little evidence of such conflict, and this might explain why the very classes which supported the movement in England were not particularly interested in making it a success in South Australia.

The Crimean War scare created the climate for the formation of volunteer bodies in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The New South Wales and Victorian

bodies, like their earlier British counterparts, received no pay. The South Australian Volunteers were paid for their service. Indeed, the notion of truly voluntary service was fashionable in South Australia only briefly, in the sixties and seventies. Before An Act to Organise and Establish a Volunteer Force in South Australia (33) was passed in September, 1854, public debate produced a number of recommendations for the future force. These ranged from rates of pay (34) (35) (36), to selection of uniform (37). The only district which suggested that volunteers should serve without pay, except for forage allowance, was Port Adelaide (38). To most people in South Australia volunteer service did not mean gratis service.

The South Australian volunteer force of 1854 was to consist of not less than 850 and not more than 2,000 men, enrolled for a term not exceeding three years, during which time they were exempt from all other military duties. A volunteer could retire at any time, provided that a substitute was enrolled. Daily pay was to be 10/- for the artillery, 6/- for infantry and cavalry, with an additional 4/- per day marching money to be paid to troops away from their headquarters. The training period for artillery and other arms was not to exceed 48 and 36 days respectively. In the case of absence without leave when the force was called out, the fine was £50, or 42 days imprisonment. Company commanders had the right to inflict punishments of confinement for one day, or stoppage of one day's pay (39).

As the Crimean war scare faded, so did enthusiasm for soldiering, and when war clouds again appeared on the

horizon, in 1858, the Second Finnis Commission sought to revitalise the movement with the quaint idea of requiring the volunteers to pay an entrance fee of £5, to be refunded after three years of service, subject to the complete return of all the equipment with which the soldier had been issued. The ranking Imperial officer in the Colony at the time commented, that the entrance fee would be a bar to otherwise highly eligible personnel, and at the same time raised the problem which was to bedevil the South Australian Army till 1895, that the force could not be efficient since it was not/subject to the Mutiny Act and, therefore, discipline could not be enforced (40).

The First Hart Commission introduced, in 1858, one variation of the concept of the true, that is the unpaid, volunteer by recommending the formation of volunteer rifle clubs (41). Subsequently, the Volunteer Amendment Act 1859 (42) reduced pay for all ranks to 3/6 per day, substituted the right of officer election by the privilege of nominating candidates for commissioned rank and officer promotion and permitted, under clause 15, the enrolment of volunteers without pay. The Act proved a two-edged sword: the drastic reduction in pay almost converted the force into a truly voluntary, unpaid organisation, but it took away the volunteers' most highly prized possession, the right to elect their own officers. The debate in the House of Assembly showed that the legislators were somewhat confused about the issues involved (43). A few tended towards a voluntarily enrolled militia, by which they understood an organisation subject to relatively strict military control. Other members still clung tenaciously to the conventional militia concept. The

government, however, had quite clearly intended to prepare the way for two forces, one paid and one unpaid, with the latter closely resembling English volunteers. Officer selection by the paid component could not be permitted, lest those aspiring to a commission should curry favour with the troops. Yet, if there was to be a completely unpaid force, then the right of officer election should not have been removed.

Although by late 1859, little was known about the effectiveness of the English volunteer movement, two distinct schools of thought began to emerge in the Colony: one favoured a voluntary, paid force, with militia-like service conditions, and relatively strict military control. The other advocated a truly voluntary force, unpaid, with all the normal privileges associated with volunteering. Both sides appeared to argue on grounds of military efficiency, but it seems highly probable that the debate had political undertones, reinforced by old world prejudice. The two most out-spoken critics of the voluntary principle were Strangways and Bagot.

H.B.T. Strangways was a well-known figure in South Australian politics. Between 1858 and 1870 he had served as attorney-general, commissioner of crown lands and finally as premier. A descendant of the landed gentry in Somerset, he was, not surprisingly, a strong supporter of the militia system and critical of volunteers. Captain C.G. Bagot, was a member of the Irish landed gentry, and thus held similar views. In August, 1859, Strangways unsuccessfully moved in the house of assembly for the withdrawal of arms from the volunteers, suggesting that, being kept in private homes, the weapons might be put to improper use (44). The press, on the other hand, attacked Strangways for equating South Australia with

Tasmania or Western Australia, where authorities would understandably have been reluctant to entrust arms to a population of ex-convicts (45). The inference seems to have been that, whereas the paid militia would be a reliable aid to civil authority, the unpaid volunteers would not. Some eighteen months later Strangways may have thought otherwise, because the Victoria volunteers had proved effective in quelling the disturbances caused by agitation for more liberal land laws (46).

There is insufficient evidence to determine whether fear of riots did play a part in the argument for and against a paid volunteer force, but the argument did illustrate the effort by South Australians to define what they understood to be the citizen soldier. It seesawed like the debate for fixed versus mobile defences; it was more bitter, because it involved people and their principles, rather than bricks and mortar.

The early sixties saw a clearer trend towards the true (unpaid) volunteer movement. The press, at first, supported it and dubbed enrolling activity under the Militia Act a farce, implying that the government had no real intention of embodying the force (47). The formation of new volunteer units was always warmly welcomed and wide publicity given to the social club manner in which candidates for both commissioned and non-commissioned ranks were nominated. For instance, the 1st Adelaide Rifles nominated their own non-commissioned officers candidates in the Hamburg Hotel in February, 1860, after a pleasurable dinner (48). But the mushroom growth of little individual corps throughout the Colony soon got out of hand. Each wished to differ from the others. 'The general effect [was] so bizarre that it could be compared with nothing else than an army in motley' (49). The honeymoon of volunteers and press support was

shortlived. The press began to realise that volunteering was becoming merely a device to circumvent the provisions of the Militia Act, 'As soon as the militia roll is complete they [the volunteers] may begin to dissolve - like Falstaff's men in buckram, they become altogether imaginary soldiers' said the Observer in 1860 (50). The volunteer rolls were large but ineffective and the force was 'as imaginary as Potemkin villages' (51).

By the end of the first quarter of 1860 the Colony had about 2130 volunteers on strength, fragmented into variously sized companies (52), not one of which produced more than six marksmen (53).

Despite the obvious shortcomings of the true volunteer system, the government proceeded to bring down the Auxiliary Volunteer Act, 1860, later often referred to as the Free Rifles Act (54). The government's reason for this measure was ostensibly the fact that, apart from increasing the military force of the Colony at no expense to the government - and this argument was denied by the press (55) - the new legislation was designed

to make it easier for volunteers to enroll at their own expense and to make their own regulations, because they\* found it inconvenient to serve under the existing act (56).

The term 'inconvenient' implied that members of units raised under the provisions of the new act did not wish to be associated in any way with the volunteers, enrolled under the Volunteer Amendment Act, 1859, which had denied volunteers

\* Author's italics.

the absolute right of officer election. The 1860 legislation which re-introduced the right of officer selection was to divide the volunteers for the next 30 years, and this conflict was to be largely responsible for the military inefficiency of the Colony in the second half of the 19th century.

The faults lay in the provisions of the Free Rifles Act themselves. The force was to arm and equip itself at its own expense; the government, therefore, had little say in the type of equipment and uniforms chosen. Since the members elected their own officers and made their own regulations the units became so independent of overall governmental control that they assumed the nature, not so much of military bodies, as of uniformed rifle clubs, exempt from military obligations under any of the existing acts. The government did have the right to disband a unit, but this was a fictitious power. In a parliamentary system which held elections almost once a year a measure of this nature would have cost vital votes.

However, despite the attractive provisions of the Auxiliary Volunteer Act 1860 there was no great rush to join the auxiliary colours. The cost of arms and equipment must have been prohibitive for the man in the street, while the gentlemen of the Colony, unlike their counterparts in England, were scarcely interested in supporting, let alone sponsoring, their own units. The period 1860/61 saw only 39 men enrolled as auxiliaries (57).

By September, 1860, the government was forced to review the force enrolled under the original Volunteer Act of 1854 and its amending legislation of 1859. The press clamoured for weeding out the ineffectives. 'Rifles which



are now rusting in the houses of their present owners should be in better hands' (58), and the implementation of the Militia Act was again strongly recommended (59). The press blamed the lack of discipline on the difficulty of combining the voluntary with the compulsory principles which governed the force. As volunteers, members could not be readily compelled to attend parades; for an officer to enforce a fine might well cost him his local popularity, or worse. Two months' continuous absence from a volunteer unit could have landed a man's name on the militia roll, but after the passing of the Auxiliary Volunteer Act, 1860, especially, such a measure would have been considered an infringement of a man's personal liberty: once exempted from compulsory service by virtue of his volunteering, he should never again be subject to potential conscription (60).

In an effort to facilitate administrative procedures and enforce discipline, the government brought down the Volunteer Amendment Act, 1860 (61). Unfortunately, the provisions of this act also failed to achieve the desired improvement in the discipline of the force. The problem did not merely concern poor attendance. There was the habit among the troops to call meetings for the purpose of censuring their officers. Such an incident happened at Kapunda, where the members censured their captain for not fixing the date of a parade (62). Similarly, the Reedbeds at Mile End criticised their captain for his disregard of men and horses when the troop had been on lengthy duty (63).

When the alleged Russian schemes for attacking Australian colonies became public late in 1864, the press

demanded a general re-orientation in military thinking: the volunteer movement had been found wanting on two occasions and a militia type of service might, therefore, still be necessary (64). Public pressure resulted in the appointment, in 1865, of the Second Hart Commission, whose report (65) showed that lack of enthusiasm for the service was partly due to the image of the force, for which both government and parliament were to blame. Not only did outward appearance leave much to be desired, since uniforms were not supplied in sufficient quantity, but the force was often publicly ridiculed by parliamentarians and even by serving members, like Strangways. There was also inadequate provision for jury exemption, and a lack of encouragement on the part of wealthier classes. The report closely examined certain technical and administrative details, such as the altering of rifle sights from the setting authorised by the professional soldiers, supposedly, a mark of initiative on the part of the volunteers and the problem of storing arms. Central storage was advocated, in preference to individual take home issues, since the former would not only ensure better maintenance of the equipment, but by making a common meeting place necessary, would foster a better esprit de corps. In examining training procedures, the report questioned the applicability of the English Hythe practice, and the suitability of volunteer officers to act as instructors. Preoccupation with target practice, at the expense of drill, was deplored. It was agreed that fragmentation of the force into many small sub-units was detrimental both to efficiency of training, particularly officer and non-commissioned officer training, and to the control of

attendance. Speed of mobilisation was adequate: most of the witnesses stated that two-thirds of their companies could be assembled within one hour of the alarm signal being given, at least at night, when members were at home; it would take longer during the day. The really important questions, however, were: whether the force should be paid, whether payment would deter certain sections of the community from joining, or from continuing to serve, and whether a militia type of force, drilling twice a year for periods of up to a fortnight, was preferable to a paid volunteer system.

The witnesses were unanimous in their opinion that payment for time spent on drill would induce the labouring classes to join, and would not deter the middle-class element from remaining in the force. The rates of pay should be commensurate with the ruling rates of pay in the Colony, in other words, the rate of 3/6 provided for in the 1859 legislation would by now be too low. Payment would also provide a means for enforcing discipline. Although those witnesses who were themselves professional officers advocated, in preference to militia, an improved volunteer system, that is, a paid force, the volunteer officers, when questioned on this point, unequivocally stated that the implementation of the Militia Act would mean the end of all voluntary effort, but that the Militia Act should be kept on the statutes as a vis-in-terrorem. It was also considered highly undesirable to maintain a mixed system of militia in the Adelaide area, and pure volunteers in the country: the militia members would degenerate to the status of pariahs, creating a class conflict. On the other hand, it was generally agreed that

a rejuvenated, paid volunteer force would be prepared to serve under militia regulations, even accepting the provisions of the Mutiny Acts.

From the Commission's point of view, the question of pay appeared to revolve around a desire that, like their English counterparts, the colonial volunteers should remain a corps of gentlemen. In fact, the Commission suggested that volunteers should be encouraged to enroll 'to become efficient auxiliaries by offering them every possible inducement except\* personal pay', while 'a paid force [of 700 infantry and 200 artillery] should be enrolled under a special act and maintained under strict military discipline', to be called out for specified periods during the year, and kept in camps or barracks during training (66).

The government acted on the recommendations of the Second Hart Commission by introducing, in May 1865, A Bill to Provide for the Establishment and Maintenance of the South Australian Guard (67), in an attempt to obtain the best of several worlds. The force would be voluntarily enlisted, yet subject to the Mutiny Acts. The question of compulsion would not arise because the members were volunteers, but without the disadvantages normally associated with volunteers, because discipline could be enforced, and it would not be a standing army, since training was to be intermittent. Neither would it be a citizen soldier army, and to this the radicals in the Colony objected strongly. The government claimed that the Guards were to be an auxiliary to the volunteer force, not, as the Observer would have it and as the Second Hart Commission

\* Author's italics.

suggested, the other way around (68). Since Guard officers were to take precedence over volunteer officers, the Guard would have been the senior force.

The bill had a very stormy passage. The very title of the force aroused suspicion. The clause allowing for the disbanding of volunteers was heavily censured, with the Observer objecting violently to the voluntary principle being dismissed in such a summary fashion (69). Public pressure began to mount in the Colony against the bill. Understandably, much of it came from the volunteers. The press gave their opinions ample coverage, but at the same time was not loath to take the volunteers themselves to task. Why should they be so bitterly opposed to the formation of a small force, different from their own? After all, volunteers had failed to fill the vacuum left by Imperial regulars. The government was justified in introducing a measure for the establishment of a disciplined force. The press conceded 'that free men defending their own country gratuitously [should do] so under a system which allowed them to make their own rules', but such a system did not produce an efficient military (70). Eventually, in June 1865, the protesting voice of the volunteers forced parliament to vote the bill into committee, in other words, back into the lap of the government, and nothing further was heard of it.

It is interesting to note that, in their efforts to be heard the volunteers acted, not as individual citizens, but as members of a military body, quite contrary to the custom of the service. Even certain members of parliament, ignoring ethics and the customs of the service, attended such meetings in their capacity as volunteers. As the Observer pointed out,

'Caesar dared to cross the Rubicon and Kingston dared to go to the Hamburg Hotel' (71).

Having tasted political success, the volunteers proceeded to campaign for a system of payment. Unlike the gentlemen volunteers in England, who feared that payment would lower the tone of the movement - reduce it to the status of a militia - South Australians saw no degradation in being paid for a day's work for one's country, provided that it was fairly earned (72).

The campaign resulted in The Volunteer Act, 1865/6 (73), which repealed all existing statutes and disbanded the volunteer force of the day, but made no change in the militia legislation. Under the new Act, the military force was to consist of a Volunteer Force (Active) of not less than 540, and not exceeding 1,000 men, and a Reserve Force, not exceeding 1,000 men. The two forces were to be based on volunteer districts and no one could enlist in the Reserve Force unless he had completed a three year term in the active Volunteer Force. Members of both forces would be exempt from any other military obligations, including impressment of their houses, horses and carriages for military purposes. Duration and location of training were to be as specified. The same applied to rates of pay, which, initially, varied from 15/- per day for a lieutenant-colonel, to 5/- for a drummer, with 4/- per day marching money and a horse allowance of 6/-, payable for service outside the district. Arms, equipment and uniform, but not horses, were to be provided by the government. These provisions were reasonable; there were few complaints. Only one or two radical M.P.s objected to the graded pay. Most importantly, however, the principle of payment had triumphed. Never again was there to be any suggestion in principle that volunteers should serve without pay.

Although junior to any Imperial troops with which it may have had to serve, the volunteer force was, by implication, to be senior to any other military raised in the Colony. Nevertheless the 1865/6 Volunteer Act was not particularly successful. By June 1865, the enrolment figure was only 350, considerably less than the stipulated minimum of 450, and the public again recommended the implementation of the Militia Act (74). Such suggestions had the desired effect. By the end of the year enrolments reached 768. In 1867 the total number of volunteers on strength was 831, until resignations, again, began to outweigh enrolments by almost three to one (75).

Reports of enquiries by the Victorian Defence Commission of 1875, the possibility of British involvement in the Balkans, and renewed agitation by the South Australian press, prompted the government in 1876 to appoint the Third Finniss Commission (76). As in previous instances, the Commission's recommendations, which included the establishment of a permanent artillery force and some changes in the volunteer system, had little impact. Perhaps the findings lacked value because members of the Commission were either too old and out-of-touch, or too junior in rank to have had the experience necessary for such an investigation. The government was obliged to seek the services of an English officer, of at least field rank, to take charge of the Colony's defences (77). In October, 1877, Colonel M. Francis Downes and Major John Goodwin took up duties as colonel commandant and senior staff officer, respectively.

In 1877, with the possibility of escalation in the Balkan crisis, public interest in defence flared briefly. The governor reported to London:

That a state of war or anticipation of war is not an unmixed evil ... may be shown by the quickening influence it has upon the energies, otherwise dormant or misdirected, of these great Australian provinces. It purges them, pro hac vice, of the log-rolling, time-serving propensities to which they are confessedly liable (78).

The volunteer movement received a shot in the arm when the government passed the Rifle Companies Act 1878 (79), to encourage the volunteer spirit in the Colony, and attempt to bring the various rifle clubs\* under some form of military control, as well as to encourage the formation of rifle companies in country towns. These rifle companies were to be co-ordinated within the South Australian National Rifle Association, which had existed under various names since the beginning of the century.\*\* The organisation was mainly concerned with arranging rifle matches within and without the Colony. Its members were obliged to attend ten drills annually, and two half-yearly inspection parades, and when called out, they were paid at the same rate as ordinary volunteers. They had the right of officer election, subject to the governor's approval, and could, at their own expense, select distinctive uniforms, subject to the approval of the Council of the Association. Each member was entitled to the loan of a government-owned rifle and to 100 rounds of ammunition per annum.. The Association itself received an annual capitation grant of £1.10.0. for every efficient member. As a sporting organisation it was very popular, and received more encouragement than either the paid or unpaid volunteers.

\* The rifle clubs in South Australia dated back to 1838, when the first Adelaide Rifle Club was formed (80)

\*\*There existed at that time yet another, completely private, organisation, namely the South Australian Rifle Club. The club refused to become involved in the military aspects of rifle shooting and, consequently, received no government support (81).



Throughout the late seventies and eighties, it had its own special column, 'The Rifle', in the Observer, which reported the activities of the South Australian National Rifle Association in detail. Between July and December, 1880, these reports outnumbered even cricket reports.

The movement was particularly strong in country areas. In the metropolitan area the members were mainly civil service companies and military rifle clubs, like the Non-Commissioned Officers Rifle and Carbine Club, which came into being on 16th September, 1880, in the Sir John Barleycorn Hotel. Its patron was the Governor, Sir William Drummond Jervois, with Colonel Downes as president (82).

Thus, at the beginning of 1879, South Australia maintained a threefold military system, which consisted of a permanent (regular) force\*, the volunteer force and the auxiliary rifle companies. This explicit division of the volunteer force into a military and an auxiliary component led to confusion, half measures and the downfall of two commandants, who had tried, by strengthening military control, to turn the rifle clubs into something resembling a military force. All control was strenuously and, until 1895, successfully resisted, possibly due to the electoral influence of these small but numerous bodies.

Downes then wanted that the paid volunteer force be renamed the Volunteer Militia Force because, when called out, they came under strict military discipline, and since the South Australian National Rifle Association so closely resembled the English volunteers, he suggested that it be renamed the Rifle

\* Vide section 5.3

Volunteer Force (83). The government followed his recommendations and passed the Local Forces Acts Amendment Act, 1881, (84) but had to allow an important amendment to the bill inserted by the legislative council: the word militia was not to be used. Contrary to British tradition, in South Australia militia service was, by definition and custom, felt to be inferior to volunteer service (85). For the next fourteen years the two non-permanent forces in South Australia were referred to as the Volunteer Military Force (V.M.F.) and the Rifle Volunteer Force (R.V.F.).

The effort to militarise the R.V.F. was no mere exercise in nomenclature:

Commissioned Officers and Sergeants must pass examinations to entitle them to the capitation grant of £1.10.0. Subjects for qualifying examinations are as follows -

- (a) Practical and Theoretical Examination in Field Exercises, 1877, Part I and Part II.
- (b) General Definitions of Field Exercise - 1877.
- (c) Command of a Company and Battalion; Field Exercise Part III (This is not compulsory for Subalterns).
- (d) Field Exercise 1877 - Part 6, Section 3-9, 15-21, Part 7.
- (e) Practical knowledge of Rifle Exercise.
- (f) Knowledge and Competency to Superintend Target Practice. (86)

Eligibility to receive capitation payment also depended on a minimum number of drill attendances. But to enforce discipline was another matter. The realisation that the R.V.F. wielded considerable political influence, must have been a severe embarrassment to the staff officers, some of whom for the first time in their lives in direct contact with volunteers, and first generation descendants of dissenters at that. After Colonel Downes succeeded in having the Goolwa Company disbanded

for lack of parade attendances (87), he was severely criticised by the legislative council. After all, a majority of the city members\* of the R.V.F. were electors of the upper house, and even attempts to formally influence members to favour a particular candidate for the legislative council were not unknown (88).

There was little the commandants could do to improve the military force as a whole in the face of the political influence exerted by one of its components. As a military body, the paid force was more efficient, at least as far as field movements and formation work were concerned, while the unpaid force had better marksmen. And so it should, for its members indulged in little activity except target practice. They could afford both the ammunition and the time to amuse themselves at the rifle butts. Militarily speaking, rifle shooting under controlled conditions was not particularly useful, being quite unlike field firing, where targets would present themselves at constantly changing ranges and in a variety of forms, impossible to simulate on a firing range. Colonel Downes defended his opinion by referring to the battle of Orleans in 1871, where Gambetta's enthusiastic recruits failed against a much smaller German force, better officered and more efficiently trained in field craft (91).

\* On 1.5.1881 the two forces in the City area were composed as follows: (89)

Well-to-do people	V.M.F. 18 per cent	R.V.F. 51 per cent
Tradesmen	55 per cent	21 per cent
Labourers and Farm		
Labourers	3 per cent	3 per cent
Others	<u>19</u> per cent	<u>23</u> per cent
	<u>95</u> per cent	<u>98</u> per cent

The R.V.F. in country areas was made up mainly of 'mechanics, artisans, clerks in country stores and places of business' (90).

The major difficulty, however, lay in lack of unified control. Following recommendations by the colonel-commandant, the South Australian Government introduced the Local Forces Acts Further Amendment Act, 1882 (92), empowering the governor to appoint the R.V.F. field officers, who had previously been appointed by their council. Also, the R.V.F. was to be placed under the command of the colonel-commandant of South Australia.

The bill had a stormy passage. One member of the house of assembly insisted 'he would be very sorry to do anything that would prevent the people in the country from improving themselves in the use of the rifle or from enjoying themselves' (93). Josiah Henry, later Sir Josiah, H. Symon objected that the force was about to lose the very characteristic which distinguished it from the paid Volunteer Military Force, and which in his opinion, was no better than a militia (94). He had, of course, voiced the government's true intention: that the status of the force should be changed.

Efforts towards centralisation and the curtailing of the independence of rifle volunteers received fresh impetus when Brigadier-General John Fletcher Owen took over command of the South Australian Military forces, in May, 1885. The following year, Owen engaged in a public controversy with Captain F.W. Good of Port Augusta, late 1st Dorset Rifle Volunteers, regarding the relative merits of paid and unpaid forces (95). It was a debate between the enthusiastic amateur and the dispassionate professional. As might be expected, the professional won on facts, but in doing so, lost the confidence of a society which, having achieved a measure of affluence, longed to model itself on England and was, therefore, predisposed towards Captain Good's sentiments in favour of an English volunteer organisation.

Little official notice was taken, either of Captain Good's arguments, or of the Observer's charges of incompetence against him (96). Good had a vested interest in a pure volunteer system (97), Owen lacked the tact necessary to sail the turbulent waters of the controversy (98). However, the government could not completely disregard Owen's recommendations, which he tabled as a parliamentary Paper in August, 1886, (99), and in which he advocated the implementation of a system based on the Canadian precedent.\* Owen cited Sir Peter Scratchley, Colonel F.T. Sargood's Report on the Victorian volunteer artillery and evidence given before the New South Wales Royal Commission of 1881, as evidence for the desirability of a paid volunteer force. The government was also pressed, notably by two of the politicians, to improve relations between the two forces and to reduce overall military expenditure.

Yielding to demands, the government passed the Defence Forces Act, 1886 (101) which, together with its regulations, re-defined the defence forces of the Colony. These were now to comprise the Permanent Naval and Military Forces, the Active Militia (formerly known as the Volunteer Military Force), the Militia Reserve (formerly the Reserve Force), the Reserve Militia, the Cadet Corps, and the National Rifle Association and Defence Clubs. Enrolment in the Reserve

\* The Canadian Militia Act, 1868, divided the country into nine military districts from which the troops were drawn on the basis of the conscription principle applied to all males between 16 and 60. There was an active militia and a reserve. If not enough people volunteered, then compulsion could be resorted to. The members of the force received pay for drill periods and had to attend an annual camp during which time they came under the provisions of the Mutiny Acts (100).

Militia was to be compulsory if insufficient numbers enrolled in the Active Militia, or in the event of threatened invasion. Both the Active Militia and the Volunteer Force could raise cavalry, field artillery, garrison artillery and infantry, in the above order of precedence. As the governing body of both civilian and military rifle clubs, the National Rifle Association was now to have the senior military officers of the Colony on its Council. Thus, rifle shooting as a sport effectively passed under the control of the professional military.

Despite centralised control of the two components of the volunteer movement, complaints continued about the decline of the force and the failure of the propertied classes to share in the national burden of defence (102). The report of yet another investigating team, the Castine Committee (103), showed that there had been an improvement among city volunteers, but country companies were neglected because instructors could not cover all country centres. The Castine Committee's report was unique - it was unanimous. More importantly, it stressed that training methods, generally, must be improved, and that, from a cost effectiveness point of view, the major training effort should be directed towards paid volunteers and mounted troops.

The Committee's report vindicated Owen's earlier views and virtually sanctioned the demise of the unpaid force, except for its highly popular mounted component. But Owen had succeeded, at the expense of his own popularity. Members of the now militarised rifle clubs objected to being treated as soldiers and not as the financially disinterested patriots they claimed to be, while the public was irked by constant criticism of an institution so dear to their hearts, and parliamentarians resented having the blame for poor parade attendances and

other short-comings laid at the ministry's door (104). Parliament respected but hated Owen's competence. When he offered to serve a further two year term, his offer was declined (105). He was never forgiven for destroying the volunteers' independence. His subsequent appointment to a high military post at Portsmouth drew the vindictive comment that '... Britain must be badly off for good officers or was still promoting incompetent ones' (106).

The Defence Forces Act, 1886 also authorised the formation of cadet corps in schools. Actually, school cadet corps had existed in the Colony for some time, since it was considered that certain disciplinary advantages would accrue from military drill in the model schools, as the private schools were then called (107). The Clare public school had had military drill since its opening in 1872 (108). It was not until 1884 that cadet training was discussed as a means of attracting youngsters to military activities (109), although some sections of the community expressed their disapproval. For instance, in 1879 the Quakers had petitioned parliament to discontinue cadet training on moral grounds (110).

The war scare of 1885 prompted a proposal for the formation of a cadet corps at Prince Alfred College, with two companies of 50 pupils each (111), and also for a cadet unit at St. Peters College (112). Nothing came of these proposals till 1889 (113), but since some 500 boys in half a dozen schools had already been issued with carbines (114), a further issue of 500 carbines was made to an additional 18 schools, bringing the total of public schools conducting cadet training to twenty-four. Yet despite all this, using schools as venues for arousing an early interest in military matters was none too popular.

However, there was considerable, if misguided, enthusiasm behind the formation of volunteer companies based on occupational or ethnic associations, despite the authorities' apprehension that such a move would lead to even greater fragmentation. South Australia had its share of well-meaning citizens, eager to promote private armies. In 1866, and again in 1879, a Civil Service Company was formed (115). There were serious suggestions to form a company of drapers, but the press rather objected to the idea. The risk to business would have been too great :

Imagine a corps, including all the drapers in Adelaide, being exposed to the deadly fire and imagine its ranks frightfully decimated ... the result would be the total cessation of the drapery business for a month or two (116).

Clinging to the principle of avoiding fragmentation, the government resisted all suggestions for raising volunteer house companies. The general-manager of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company at Port Pirie, in 1900, was deeply disappointed when advised that a BHP company could not be approved (117).

The formation of volunteer companies based on ethnic associations was at first also discouraged. When, in 1866,, three leading citizens, Harris, Scarfe and Frazer, iron-mongers, pressed for a Scottish company, their request was viewed as a scarcely veiled attempt to introduce highland dress into the forces (118). Nevertheless, that year a Scottish company did come into existence, its members providing themselves with national dress at their own expense (119). For a short time there were Irish companies as well. The feeling was that while remaining true to the traditions of the past, the Irish would combine with the Scottish, the Australian and other corps to defend their common heritage. As Archbishop O'Riley



enthusiastically stated,

... if Australia is worth living in, it is surely worth defending. The Highland corps now in process of formation will fight none the worse when the summons comes for being reminded by plaid or hose that they are children of Bonny Scotland nor will the Irish Rifles be less strong-hearted with a bit of green braid of facings or bronze shamrock to tell them where their fathers came from - the Emerald Isle (120).

Towards the end of the century national companies received official sanction. A company was formed from members of the Australian Natives Association. The Scottish units by now enjoyed tremendous support (121), and in 1900 imported from London a badge, a laurel wreath with a thistle in the centre (122), as well as receiving their first kilt, in the tartan of the Gordon Highlanders (the name of the South Australian commandant at the time was Gordon) (123).

Amid increasing economic difficulties of the nineties, heightened radical sentiments, both in the community and in the legislature, prepared the climate for further curtailing unpaid voluntary service. The Defence Forces Act Amendment Act, 1890 (124) changed the name of the Volunteer Force to Volunteer Militia Reserve Force (V.M.R.F.). Attendance at a camp, for which men were now paid, was made a pre-requisite for the extra efficiency grant. The Act also eliminated some of the earlier fragmentation. For instance, infantry could only be enrolled within a 15 mile radius by road, or 20 miles by rail, from such centres as Gawler, Riverton, Kapunda, Port Pirie, Gladstone and Moonta. This meant that infantry ceased to exist in the South West, along the southern sea-board and in the Port Augusta area. Mounted infantry, which could only be enrolled within 100 miles of Adelaide, still remained a purely voluntary body, although it was felt that it should, somehow, be made part of the Active Force. However, the

radical C.C. Kingston, objected strongly to government support for such purely voluntary bodies, which 'were simply an incentive to pleasurable pot-hunting and tend to prevent men from joining a disciplined force' (125).

The 1890 Act was also intended to reduce expenditure, by shortening the engagement in the Active Militia from three to two years and thereby increasing the reserve component to include a third battalion. Every effort was made to avoid giving rise to derogatory comment on local defence matters, either among the public, or in the legislature. The new commandant, Colonel Joseph Maria Gordon, a man with extensive colonial experience in New Zealand, Victoria and South Australia, made sure that, despite severe cuts in expenditure, the best possible use was made of existing provisions. For instance, in 1894, he was able to hold well attended camps, one in the Port Adelaide area, and others in various country centres, which did not cost the government a penny: participants volunteered to bring their own provisions. This example of self-support prompted generous donations from the business community. Attendance was about 80 per cent of the nominal strength in the metropolitan area, and somewhat less in the country areas, and showed conclusively that, when called upon, the voluntary spirit in the community was far from dead (126).

Credit for the fact that the voluntary spirit was still alive must go to the press. The 'volunteer force had become a nationalised institution' (127), despite accusations of inefficiency, little support from wealthy colonists and little interest from the rest of the community.

In England everybody from poor to peasant put their heads together and their shoulders to the wheel ... here rich men as a rule have persistently held aloof ... and even the ladies have not given the military a fair share of encouragement (128).

The press endeavoured to overcome the English traditional dislike of matters military by assuming the role of a public relations department and keeping the public informed of the day to day activities of the force (129). Occasionally, the military failed to supply adequate information. 'The pen and the sword appeared to have parted company', were the resigned words of the Observer in the early sixties (130). Nevertheless, throughout the century, the press succeeded in keeping the concept of military service in general, and voluntary service in particular, before the public as an indispensable part of the democratic way of life.

It is in a political context that we must view some of the reports of, say, rifle practices. The press took the opportunity to introduce the dissenters' own particular brand of radicalism into the military arena by contrasting English and South Australian conditions and pointing out that the support of the wealthy in England had been detrimental to the movement: 'they had smothered it by over-patronage' (131). The practice of offering bounties to induce enrolment reduced membership of the force to the very poor and the very wealthy, and created the 'great social gulf which swallowed almost every national movement in England' (132). The South Australian system was considered sounder than its English counterpart 'because it derived from the State and did not rely on private ostentation' (133). In this context the press never failed to attack profit conscious colonists mainly those in the business community, when they found it inconvenient to release an employee for training (134).

The press did, albeit grudgingly, credit the English system with a few virtues, among them the Wimbledon rifle matches which, as a national institution, almost ranked equal with the Derby. Consequently, rifle matches by proxy enjoyed considerable popularity, as on the occasion of a contest between the Milang Company and the English Robin Hood Rifles in 1864 (135). Later, military sports activities were to assume the character of public entertainments. They were well attended. Much interest was shown in the mounted competitions, which included sword to sword exercises, lance tilting, 'cleaving the Turks head', tent pegging, and the quaint 'thread the needle race' which required horsemen carrying threads to gallop up to the ladies and dismount, wait for needles to be threaded, and gallop to the finish (136). Other activities, more for the enjoyment of the members themselves, included picnics like the popular steamer trips from Semaphore and Glenelg to the 'Yankalilla Military Picnic and Sports Day' (137).

Dinners, smoke socials and, to a lesser extent, official balls, played a considerable part in the life of the citizen soldiery. A Citizen Military Force officer, a member of the Military Board, told the author in 1958, 'fifty per cent of the success of the Citizen Military Force is due to its social activities'. The premise appears to have been just as valid a hundred years before. Apart from the conviviality - numerous toasts were the custom in those days - the smoke socials provided an opportunity for airing grievances, for making unofficial public statements, and for subtly influencing any present members of the legislature (138).

The social activities of the commissioned ranks centred around the Officers' Club, an exclusive institution,

whose military function will be discussed later. The press exhibited a perfunctory interest in the club's activities (139), unless they provided ammunition for criticising the military administration. When Colonel Downes censured a member for reporting to the press on officers' functions, both the Observer and the Register were immediately indignant: the senior military officer was '... apparently not able to distinguish between the private rights and military obligations of club members' (140).

An experiment in democratising the force which gained a great deal of support in South Australia was the Military Club, or, as it was sometimes called, the Volunteer Club, formed to promote good fellowship between the various arms of the service. Unlike the Officers' Club, it was not meant to be a venue for implementing military policy, though for a while it appears to have been the unofficial head-quarters of the National Rifle Association (141). The Club, whose membership consisted of all other ranks, with officers as honorary members, was officially opened by the Governor on 2nd July, 1881. For some time it flourished, under vice-regal patronage and, among other things, provided the premises for military band practice and for all ranks smoke socials generally. It appears however, that by 1885 the club had ceased to exist, because non-commissioned officers' functions were being held in such places as the Sir John Barleycorn Hotel (192). Although they were meant to identify the force as a civil institution, these social activities were insufficient to justify the unpaid volunteer's place in the society.

By the middle nineties, organised unpaid volunteering had come to an end, and began to give way to the concept of the citizen soldier, a concept based on universal military service. Although C.C. Kingston, and others, had anticipated

the sentiments of men like Deakin, Hughes, Ewing by some ten or fifteen years (143), it was not till 1895 that the right climate for this type citizen soldiery began to materialise. The commandant, Colonel Joseph Maria Gordon, was instructed to prepare two bills, one to be known as a Universal Service Bill, and the second simply as a Re-Organisation Bill. The Universal Service Bill was never introduced, since Kingston feared the expenditure involved might have been too great (144). However, the re-organisation proposal was introduced, and contained the universal service provisions. The bill was passed as the Defences Act, 1895 (145). It provided for the South Australian military forces to consist of the Permanent Military Force, the Active Military Force and the Reserve Military Force. Significantly, no mention was made of such terms as militia or volunteers, but only soldiers. The service was to be based on universal military training, but eligible men could volunteer. There was to be no distinction between Active and Reserve Force officers; both would rank equally, in accordance with the date of commission. In other words, the Reserve Force was merely the continuation of two years' service in the Active Force.

The new legislation was well received. The Register congratulated Colonel Gordon on the framing of the bill and quoted Major General-Hutton as saying that the South Australian legislation was in advance of that of any other colony (146).

The wheel of South Australian military history had gone full circle. It had begun with compulsory and volunteer service legislation, side by side, as two separate acts. As the Colony prospered and became more and more anglicised in outlook, the compulsory service concept lost its original meaning and remained only as a means of threatening South

Australians into the volunteer forces. Various schemes to make volunteering a practical proposition in South Australia failed, due to lack of interest and lack of support by the wealthier classes. Volunteer service was never the success it was in England. With the economic decline in the eighties and nineties, and the resultant growth of the working-class community, the radical concept of the citizen soldier, apparent in the ideas of the Adelphi planners, and frequently expressed by the first generation of colonist dissenters, revived and formed the background to the 1895 legislation. This legislation saw military service as a universal national obligation, and recognised the role of the citizen soldier as being directly in support of, and complementary to the permanent force.

5.3 The Permanent Military Force, 1878-1901

The establishment of a permanent military force in South Australia was first recommended in the Freeling-Scratchley report of 1866 (147), which suggested a complement of 60 all ranks. In 1876, the Third Finniss Commission (148) envisaged a force of 100 ranks, permanently based in the Port Adelaide area, firstly, because maintenance of the heavy ordnance equipment was considered to be beyond the capabilities of volunteers, and secondly, because volunteers may have been unable to man this front line of defence instantly in the event of an alert. The only expression of public concern for the proposal for a permanent military force was a letter suggesting that the force should form an adjunct to the police force (149).

Following the Jervois report of 1877 (150), the commandant, Colonel M.F. Downes, submitted in 1878 an estimate for £10,155, to cover the annual cost of four officers, 15 non-commissioned officers and 90 other ranks (151). He also requested an infantry contingent of 50 all ranks. This the government regarded as an attempt to introduce the concept of a standing army. Downes' request was rejected (152).

Nevertheless, in October, 1878, the government introduced the Military Forces Bill, 1878, (153) thereby formally establishing a permanent military force in the Colony. It was to consist of a field officer, three subalterns and 130 other ranks, and be subject to the Mutiny Acts. The enlistment period was to be for three or five years, with the incentive of additional pay for soldiers who enlisted for the longer term. In addition, members of the permanent force were to receive 6d. a day deferred pay. The act provided for a reserve, open to ex-members, and others who were prepared



to serve under the provisions of the Mutiny Acts. The age limit for the reserve was 45 years, the pay was £5 per six months, payable six months later, and members were obliged to attend six drills per annum. No territorial limitations were placed on the areas where the permanent force and its reserve were liable for service. The legislation also provided for the police force to be enlisted in the reserve, thus taking into consideration the possibility of the permanent army serving as an aid to the civil power. Non-commissioned officers of the permanent force were automatically eligible for preference in civil service positions.

When the attorney-general introduced the Military Forces Bill and explained its aims, he emphasised that the estimated cost was £13,500 per annum, but an efficiently trained force could not be had cheaply. 'If the Honourable Members did consider the venture too costly, it would be very much a case of

We don't want to fight,  
 But by Jingo if we do,  
 We've got no ships, we've got no men  
 And we want the money too.' (154)

The House was not amused. Objections were raised. A permanent force was not only alien to the spirit of the people, it threatened their very liberty. The introduction of permanent artillery could be the thin edge of the wedge: soon the military would demand permanent cavalry and infantry as well. On the other hand, should this force be sent out of the Colony, South Australia would again be as defenceless as it had been when the Imperial troops were withdrawn. There were other objections, on the grounds that permanent officers would introduce a degree of snobbishness into the community, and that the proposed establishment of 50 all ranks

in excess of Jervois' original recommendation would merely 'provide a cushy billet for some pet from England' (155). It was also suggested that the permanent force should have been organised on a federal basis; there would then be no danger of its having a demoralising effect on the volunteers (156). In fact, the first commanding officer, Colonel Downes, received his commission (157) directly on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty. The oath of allegiance referred to the Crown only, and not in any way to the Colony of South Australia, thus making the status of the force the same as that of the Imperial troops (158).

Despite the absence of serious objections, the provisions of the act were not implemented until 1882. A major reason for the delay was lack of barrack accommodation. Even the destitute asylum was considered at one time. Eventually rooms in the Institute building were chosen, because of their proximity to the police barracks and the gun sheds (159). Above all, Downes wanted a central staff office, a Kommandantur, to serve as an overall military head-quarters.

The force was raised eventually, though its other ranks complement only reached full strength once, in 1890, to provide a garrison for Albany. During the waterside workers' strike in 1890 the force was alerted to aid the civil power, but was not involved in any action (160). At the outbreak of the Boer War some of the commissioned and many of the non-commissioned officers in the first South Australian contingent came from within its ranks. More importantly, the force provided postings for a number of experienced Imperial officers, whose skills would otherwise not have been available to the Colony. It was also an invaluable local training ground for both South Australian and English staff officers. Those who

had served in the permanent forces discharged their subsequent duties more successfully, than their colleagues who had had no opportunity to adjust to the local political and military climate.

5.4 Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Officers

South Australia had nine military commandants prior to federation. Their task had not been easy, since the government often failed to make its policy clear, while their own professionalism, until the arrival of Downes, tended to fall far short of the required standards. Nor did the need for combining military efficiency with concessions which had to be made to the citizen soldier, simplify matters. It was also unfortunate that accusations of being '... War Office pets or ne'er-do-wells', or that officers above field rank were 'rusty' by the time they reached the Colony, were sometimes levelled at serving or ex-Imperial officers and, more unfortunately still, were often true (161).

From the early sixties, officer selection in South Australia was based on the results of competitive examinations, not the applicant's social status, contrary to the English precedent of 'gentlemen first and soldiers afterwards'. In the matter of selecting a commandant, however, especially in the early part of the century, the government had little choice. It could either be one of a small number of colonial officers, with little military experience, and that more often than not quite obsolete, or the senior Imperial officer in the Colony.

As South Australia's Army evolved we can distinguish three distinct groups of officers, the Imperial officers, the South Australian staff officers, and the South Australian regimental officers. The Imperial officers commanded the detachments of Imperial troops in the Colony, at times acted as lieutenant-governor designates and on one or two occasions

actually functioned as head of state. In the fifties and early sixties they fulfilled the duties of inspecting officers for the local forces, assisted in their training and, on one occasion, the senior Imperial officer was, in fact, colonel-commandant of South Australia's fledgeling army.

The South Australian staff, serving full time, consisted of the commandant and usually one or two staff officers. The former was in overall command of the force and thus was responsible to the ministry for the day to day administration of the force and was the level from which policy was recommended to the government of the day. The staff officers were mainly concerned with administrative tasks and assisted in training, either by direct instruction or by supervising the Imperial non-commissioned instructors. From the early eighties onwards, some of the staff officers commanded and trained the Colony's permanent forces.

The South Australian regimental officers were local citizens serving on a part-time basis. Their responsibility was the command and training of the part-time citizen army units and sub-units.

The first South Australian commandant was Boyle Travers Finniss. Educated at Sandhurst, he was commissioned in 1825 as ensign in the 56th Regiment of Foot, sold his commission in 1835 after eight years of fairly uneventful service. In 1854, whilst serving as colonial-secretary for South Australia he was given the task of organising the South Australian force, with the local rank of lieutenant-colonel, and inspecting officer (162). Finniss' military duties were not very arduous; the appointment was almost in the nature of an honorary one. The actual training of the new force was left

in the hands of Major E. Moore, the officer commanding the South Australian detachment of the 11th Regiment of Foot (North Devon).

Moore succeeded in establishing harmonious relations with the volunteers. The same could not be said of his successor, Major S.L.K. Nelson of the 40th Regiment of Foot (2nd Somersetshire). Faced with the conflict between standard military discipline and the spirit of citizen soldiery, Major Nelson exhibited a singular lack of tact. He interfered in the domestic arrangements of the volunteer companies (163), and succeeded in arousing the personal animosity of prominent South Australian officers, among them Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Freeling, R.E. (164). Nelson had to be removed from active participation in the volunteer movement, otherwise no volunteers would have remained in the service. (165).

Captain F.S. Blyth, also of the 40th Regiment of Foot, was, in 1860, appointed Finniss' successor to 'the general management of the volunteer force with the colonial rank of colonel' (166). Blyth's relations with the volunteers were amicable. In a memorial presented to him on his departure for New Zealand in April 1863, he was paid a glowing tribute (167). However, Blyth could not resist a snub to the government which had treated him rather shabbily in a number of ways. In his letter of resignation as colonel-commandant, he spoke of 'his endeavour to carry out the command and the wishes to the satisfaction of the Governor-in-Chief ...', not of the government of the day. The point was well taken; the government merely acknowledged receipt of his resignation, without expressing the customary thanks and good wishes for his future (168).

After Blyth's departure, Lieutenant-Colonel Finniss was again briefly considered for the position of colonel-commandant, but the governor appointed Captain John Hesqueth Biggs, late 49th Regiment, instead. A parliamentary debate ensued after the appointment was made public. Why was a junior officer appointed instead of Finniss? At the time, neither officer was in the Imperial service, hence both satisfied the popular requirement that volunteers should be commanded by volunteers. Despite his undoubtedly greater service experience (169), Captain Biggs' appointment was the one occasion in South Australia when a commandant owed his posting directly to political patronage (170). Colonel Biggs was an excessively strict disciplinarian, particularly with respect to those volunteer officers who may have been, even remotely, challengers to his position. His arguments with Captain Blackham of the Port Adelaide artillery over technical gun details (171), his recommendations to have Majors Brinkley and Torrens removed from the list of officers over a technicality concerning leave of absence, confirm this impression (172).

One of the disciplinary problems, which marred Biggs' tour of duty, was a court of enquiry, convened to re-examine certain charges brought by Biggs against Captain J.C. Ferguson, officer commanding a troop of cavalry, and against the senior permanent instructor, Sergeant Major McBride (173). The court of enquiry was concerned with three fundamental aspects of citizen soldiery. (1) Is a soldier on parade, when ever he is in uniform, or only after actually fallen in? (2) Are the volunteer company officers senior to, or do they have to take orders from, the regular staff officers? (3) Are volunteer officers appearing in court citizens or soldiers? Only the last point was satisfactorily resolved:

unless subpoenaed, an officer, when in court in connection with a service matter, was regarded as a soldier, and not as a civilian (174).

Other disciplinary actions initiated by Biggs did little to enhance the image of the military, so much so that the Register condemned quite openly the disciplinary facets of military life.

... a court martial can be got to sit for seven days collecting the most<sup>ly</sup> mitigated silliness that was ever submitted to arbitration ... Court martialling ... must be regarded as proving one of two things, either the Head of the force does not possess sufficient moral control over it or that subordinates are singularly deficient in moral respect. (175)

The government was forced to institute an enquiry into the Staff Department (176). As a result, Biggs was dismissed, and by April, 1869, South Australia had a new commandant, in the person of its Commissioner of Police, Peter Edgar Warburton.

Warburton's service as South Australian commandant was plagued by the same conflicts which at times had hampered his predecessors, namely, the position of volunteers vis-a-vis Imperial troops, when brigaded together (177). Despite his competence, Warburton's contribution to the defence of South Australia was insignificant. Although officially appointed as colonel-commandant, he was treated more like a stand in for someone else. Returning from a journey of exploration, Warburton found himself superseded by the temporary re-appointment of Biggs, whereupon he returned his commission (178).

Subsequent to the Finnis Commission of 1876, and under the influence of the Jervois report, the government asked for the services of a 'competent Royal Artillery officer', to be seconded from the British Army as commandant (179). Two Imperial officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Major Frances Downes, R.A.,



and Major John Goodwin, as his staff officer, were sent out to the Colony in 1877. Their arrival ushered in a period of military professionalism in South Australia.

Colonel Frances Downes<sup>\*</sup> was born in February 1834, at Dedham, Essex. He entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, in 1848 and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery in 1852. He served in the Crimean War in 1855, at the siege of Sebastopol. He was instructor of fortifications at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, from 1858 to 1859. He commanded the artillery on Mauritius from 1863 to 1865 and on St. Helena from 1869-1871. Subsequently, he spent five years as instructor at the Artillery School for the English Militia and Volunteers. Downes served as South Australian commandant from 1877 to 1885, he spent the next three years as Secretary to the Victorian Defence Department, and returned to South Australia for a further four years as commandant. He retired in May 1892, and died in Victoria in 1923 (180).

It was Downes who introduced military expertise and professionalism to South Australia, although, at first, Downes seemed to make little impact on military thinking in the Colony, having laid the groundwork for the permanent force. Meanwhile his staff officer, Goodwin, was occupied with the problem of making paid and unpaid forces work harmoniously with each other. Downes emerged, in 1878, as an opponent of unpaid volunteers, provoking censure on two counts. Firstly, volunteers were citizen soldiers and not regulars, and hence would revolt against anything smacking of despotism, military or otherwise. 'This is a lesson which any commander of a colonial volunteer force would have to learn and it is just as well he should make up his mind at once' (181). Secondly, \*Downes was given colonial rank of colonel on taking up duty in the Colony. Whilst serving in Victoria from 1885 to 1888 he was accorded the colonial rank of major-general.

Downes failed to appreciate the public relation function of the press, which was to 'publish anything that was fair and not to publish anything that was spurious' (203). In addition, the press rarely failed to emphasise that the force existed for the benefit of the Colony, and not for that of the colonel, and it was the latter's duty to promote military efficiency by exercising tact as well as by displaying military skills (182).

Downes soon learned his lesson in public relations. Militarily speaking, however, he had not learnt the lesson of Majuba Hill, <sup>(1877)</sup> and continued to point to the highly successful Prussian infantry, trained to fire kneeling down or standing up, under ground conditions very similar to the South Australian coastal plains, precisely the area where South Australians would have had to fight. Consequently, he supported only those new units in which the emphasis was on a high degree of drill, rather than on bushcraft.

One of Downes' practical contributions to military art was the design of vanishing targets, to be fired at by men on the move (183). It was probably the first time that fire and movement was simulated on a rifle range. He was also the only commandant on record to have taken personal command in field exercises (184).

After his re-appointment in March 1888, Downes was again briefly involved in the controversy of paid versus unpaid forces. He criticised some members of parliament for over-rating the efficiency of the Rifle Volunteer Force (unpaid) and for trying to gain more and more privileges for them. He freely conceded that there was good material in the R.V.F., '... but as a rule the officers [were] in the hands of their men and [had] no moral control over them ...' (185). Downes expected strong public resentment, and it came. No

one doubted his motives, but he became persona non-grata for criticising an institution which, though recognised as being of little use, was, nevertheless, considered sacrosanct, because it was based on the voluntary principle (186).

In the period between Downes' first and second tour of duty in South Australia, that is between 1885 and 1888, the conflict between the purely voluntary citizen soldier concept, with all its shortcomings, and the striving for military efficiency by the professionals, reached its peak. Brigadier-General John Fletcher Owen was commanding in South Australia, the most highly qualified and experienced officer to serve in the Colony. Born on 8th April, 1839, in Derbyshire, he entered the military in 1856 and after various administrative and active service postings was appointed commandant in South Australia on 26th March, 1885. He returned to England in 1888. Then from 1891 to 1894 he served as commandant in Queensland and concluded his military career as commandant of Malta (187).

Owen was a hard-working officer who paid a great deal of attention to recruiting the right sort of men, not '... pale faced, narrow chested wobbling boys, but fine stalwart men ...' (188). Historically, Owen's importance lay in his uncompromising stand regarding the unpaid Rifle Volunteer Force. To Owen the paid force was the senior branch of the service (189). The commanding officer of the Rifle Volunteers Force, Lieutenant Colonel C.J. Lovely, resigned after Owen appointed two officers of the (paid) Volunteer Military Force to take charge of a combined forces field day. Owen's professional integrity would not allow him to compromise, as in fact, most of the other commandants had done, and were to continue to do until the political climate changed. From 1887 onwards it was open

war between the commandant and the unpaid branch. Owen was charged with prejudice by parliament and press (190) (191). By 1888 even the usually objective Observer clamoured for Owen's removal, and for the appointment of a less strict disciplinarian. 'The colonial idea [of discipline] may be very wrong and may be very un-military, but it is only by recognising and accepting that it is the colonial idea, that a defence force may be obtained' (192). It is, therefore, not surprising that Owen's offer to serve for another term fell on deaf ears and Downes returned for a second term.

When the time came to appoint Downes' successor, the Premier, Charles Kingston, was most anxious to appoint a local man. The importation of yet another serving Imperial officer would most likely have provoked a public outcry. Thus, Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Maria Gordon was made acting commandant in 1892 (193). The appointment was confirmed in 1893. Gordon was a colourful personality. He combined appreciable colonial social knowhow with tact, determination and the ability to appear professionally very knowledgeable, whilst actually learning his trade as he went along. His success at the latter is borne out by his last appointment as Australian Chief of General Staff and First Member of the Military Board, in 1912.

José Maria Jacobo Ramon Francisco Gabriel del Corazon de Jesus Gordon y Prendergast, to give him the full name, with which he was christened in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, on 19.3.1856, was descended from the First Earl of Huntley, through the Spanish line of the Gordons of Beldoney, Ward-house and Kildrummy. The family was famous for its adventurers, soldiers of fortune, some of whom served under

Peter the Great, helped to assassinate Wallenstein, were cavalry officers in the Polish army, and of whom one was called the 'last of Nelson's Captains'. Gordon joined the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in 1874. His practical experience included brief periods of duty with the Carlist army in Estella, in Spain in 1874, and at Limerick, Ireland, where he contracted rheumatic fever and resigned his commission. To regain his health, he went to New Zealand, where he served under Colonel Reader as drill instructor. He resigned to take up duties as private secretary to Sir Frederick Weld, Governor of Tasmania, but the appointment did not materialise. Arriving in Melbourne he tried his hand at editing the Turf Issue, then as a merchant, and as an actor, and eventually called at Adelaide while en route for Scotland. He became a police instructor in South Australia in 1881, and commenced his duties with the South Australian military forces on 2.1.1882 as staff instructor, with the rank of lieutenant. Gordon made many friends, became a member of the Adelaide Club, and had ready entry to Government House. Eventually, he assisted in organising the permanent artillery, was acting commandant between Owen's departure and Downes' return in 1888, and assumed command in 1892.\* Gordon's major contribution to South Australia's defence was the pioneering of the universal service legislation of 1895. During the preparation of the bill occurred the one and only instance which earned him the displeasure of the government for exceeding '... the precise limits of his duties' by intimating to the press that officers pay was too low' (195).

The Boer War had broken out during Gordon's

\* The foregoing biographical sketch is mainly derived from Joseph Maria Gordon's autobiography (194).

absence in London and the task of raising the South Australian contingent fell to Lieutenant-Colonel James Stuart. Born in Derbyshire in 1848, he was commissioned lieutenant in the 2nd West York Rifles. He migrated to South Australia and during the Russian scare of 1877 joined the Norwood company as a private. Commissioned a year later, he went to England, attended a staff course at Aldershot, and observed the German and French armies in their autumn manoeuvres. After his return he was retrenched in 1895, and for a while was inspector of distilleries. He came back into the force as commanding officer, First Battalion Adelaide Rifles, in 1898, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel and in May 1898 was appointed acting commandant (196). He was the first officer of field rank, fully trained in South Australia, to reach the standard of competence the Colony required.

Until the early sixties, commissioned officers had been the gentlemen from commercial society, who met in Aldridge's Rooms to discuss the affairs of the force. The principle of officer election was firmly established, with little evidence of patronage (197) or any sign that those officers who were seconded from the Imperial army, like Freeling, or who were on half pay, claimed any status other than that of a South Australian citizen (198).

In the whole of South Australia's military history there is evidence of only one status promotion, that of Major R.R. Torrens to brevet-colonel (199), and this seems to have been purely an act of defiance against the senior Imperial officer. The promotion, in 1867, of two eligible gentlemen to honorary major and captain, as aides-de-camp to the Duke of Edinburgh, evoked considerable criticism in the Colony (200)

and it was not till the late nineties that some honorary promotions were again made (201). There is no evidence that class distinction, patronage, or family connections, had any effect on officer appointment or promotion, provided that the candidate's background was respectable. Thus, the recommendation for the appointment of an iron worker, F.H. Gray, was accepted, at the same time as the promotion of a Captain Fisher, nephew of Sir Hurtle Fisher, was rejected on grounds of the candidate's insolvency (202). Similarly, hotel keepers or other licensed victuallers were not considered respectable enough for a commission (203).

The very nature of the force, originally very democratic, was undoubtedly the cause of some of its internal political conflicts. Elected officers apparently considered themselves entitled to direct access to the executive of state, by-passing their superiors, not only in cases of grievances, but even in purely military matters. Apparently, the chief-secretaries encouraged this practice, and only reluctantly disciplined such officers after the strongest representations by the commandants (204). When disciplinary action against a member of the force had to be taken, regimental officers often took the side of their men and openly defied their superiors. In 1867, when a trooper was reprimanded by his staff squadron sergeant major, Captain Ferguson took the side of the trooper. This minor incident was magnified and lasted for over twelve months (during which time Ferguson showed repeated signs of insubordination in order to shield his men), and resulted not only in Ferguson's dismissal, but also in the resignation of the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Higgins (205). It was taking the Colony a long time to realise that, in the

conflict between a democratic way of life, as exemplified by the general nature of a citizen army, and the autocratic command structure of a military force, the latter had to be supported if the force was to be at all efficient (206).

Rules governing officer appointments and promotions were tightened in the eighties. When the Riverton troop elected Dr. W.T. Hayward to the captaincy of their troop, his appointment was not recommended, because a medical man with a large practice could not have been expected to devote the necessary time to military duties (207). A year later age limits were fixed for all commissioned ranks. Lieutenant-colonels had to retire at the age of 55, majors at 50, captains at 45 and lieutenants at 35. Officers in the reserve force could hold their appointments five years longer (208).

The Howie Affair in 1890, which started with Captain Howie's appearance in mufti at the theatre, at a vice-regal command performance (209), showed that relations between the officer corps and parliament, and among the officers themselves, were, at times, very strained. Probably the main cause was looseness of legislation, which in turn implied that the very principles governing the military policy of the Colony were still uncertain.

While officers had their difficulties in terms of internal military politics, and while they came from different walks of life, they had a common social venue in the Militia Officers Club of South Australia, founded by Colonel Downes in 1878 (210). The club served as an officers mess, command headquarters and training centre. It was the venue for compulsory lectures and briefings, and also served as an orderly room. The orders book was kept there from 1883 to 1885, and later the minute book. The club also contained



a military library. The club's first premises were in the barracks behind the present State Library of South Australia. During the eighties and nineties it was variously located, in Pulteney Street, in the South Australian Club Hotel and in the Melbourne Hotel. An impression of the premises, as they appeared in 1894, can be gleaned from an article in the Observer (211).

The club did not arouse the resentment, experienced in England when the United Service Club was formed, which could have stemmed from fears of such an association's threat to the democratic institutions of the country (212). The South Australian club's main objective was to cement closer ties between the officers. It was more than just a meeting place; it reflected the spirit of the volunteer movement.

The volunteers brought much pageantry to the lives of the citizens in those days of few diversions. The panoply of military parades, reviews and ceremonials were highlights of their lives. Old men still recount their memories of the spectacular ceremonial parades in the parklands below Montefiore Hill. The crowds gathered to watch the troops assembled in their scarlet uniforms, the officers resplendent in their regalia, cheered by the bugle calls, the fife band and rolling drums. How critical were the onlookers when the firing of the 'feu de Joie' was uneven, or the march past irregular. Finally there was the excitement when the artillery belched out a salute which made the women folk shriek with fright and stuff their fingers in their ears.

From this account it is easy to form a mental picture of the elated officers assembling in the club after the parades in 'an assembly de rigueur' where reproof and praise were evenly delivered, to the discomforture or pleasure of the officers concerned. All was in keeping with the glamour of soldiering in the Victorian period.

The club was an integral part of the military structure and played a role not to be confused with conviviality.  
(213)

Members considered their club as an indispensable adjunct of the force which warranted government support and had no hesitation in petitioning parliament for a subsidy of £250 to

maintain the institution (214). There is no record that the government agreed.

If the South Australian government was to blame for what was tantamount to disaffection in the officer corps, with the resultant ill effects on the force generally, the same cannot be said in the case of non-commissioned instructor ranks. Instructors were brought from England, often one at a time. Their failure to impart efficiency to the force was mainly due to faulty supervision, particularly in country areas. There were other reasons. Some non-commissioned officers found themselves in financial difficulties, due to low travel allowances on instruction trips into the country. There was a number of instances of instructors being drunk on parade. The principal difficulty arose over the relationship between permanent non-commissioned instructors and the volunteer officers in command of troops which the N.C.O.'s had to instruct. Contemptuous of the amateurish efforts of volunteers, the drill instructors were apt to interfere in regimental activities, or to make tactless and disparaging remarks about the citizen officers. When the last of the Imperial non-commissioned officers was repatriated to England, the government chose to rely on local resources. Determined efforts were at last being made to train volunteer other ranks as regimental non-commissioned officers and drill instructors.

In the person of Lieutenant-Colonel James Stuart, the Colony had successfully produced a commissioned officer, fully competent to take charge of the defence arrangements in South Australia, and to raise an expeditionary force. Similarly, the locally trained regimental officers were considered competent to take the field in South Africa and,

in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the same must be assumed of the non-commissioned officers. In fact, all sub-alterns for the third South African contingent had been drawn from the ranks of non-commissioned volunteers. The military in South Australia had come of age.\*

The bewildering array of changes in organisation and nomenclature might deem it desirable to summarise briefly the military forces in South Australia during the nineteenth century.\* In the fifties the Colony had Imperial troops stationed in Adelaide. In 1854 she raised a paid volunteer force organised into a number of almost independent rifle companies. There was also a troop of cavalry.

The sixties saw the departure of the Imperial troops to New Zealand in 1863. They returned to South Australia in 1866 and stayed till 1870 when the garrison was withdrawn to England. The volunteers were organised into cavalry, artillery and infantry. The latter consisted of a battalion organisation of paid troops (Adelaide Rifles) and a number of independent unpaid rifle companies. From 1866 onwards the military organisation was based on volunteer districts, and the force consisted of the Volunteer Force (paid) and the Reserve Force (unpaid). In addition there were a number of independent unpaid rifle companies loosely affiliated with the military structure through the South Australian National Rifle Associations.

Little change occurred in the seventies except for re-naming the paid component as the Volunteer Military Force (V.M.F.) and the unpaid rifle companies as the Rifle Volunteer Force (R.V.F.).

\* vide Appendices W. and W1.

The eighties saw the birth of the Permanent Military Force (1882) and in 1886 the reorganisation of the citizen forces into the Active Militia (formerly V.M.F.), its own reserve, called the Militia Reserve (formerly known as the Reserve Force), the Volunteer Force (formerly the R.V.F.), and the National Rifle Association Defence Clubs.

Finally, in the nineties the name of the Volunteer Force was changed to Volunteer Militia Reserve Force (V.M.R.F.). The major change occurred after the Defences Act, 1895 was passed. From then onwards South Australia's military forces were divided into the Permanent Military Force on one hand, and the Active Military Force and the Reserve Military Force on the other. In other words, there were only permanent soldiers and citizen soldiers in South Australia.

CHAPTER VISOUTH AUSTRALIA'S NAVAL FORCES 1884-1901

They have been so long protected for nothing that it must be hard for them to see why that happy state should be interrupted.

United Services Magazine, January, 1892 (1)

It occurs to me that in defending Port Adelaide a moving battery as well as fixed would be exceedingly desirable.

J.P. Boucaut, Commissioner of Public Works, 1876 (2)

It should be observed that Adelaide is more open to attack ... than either Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne ... The defence of South Australia is, therefore, more dependent on naval means than any of the capitals of the other Australian colonies.

Sir William Drummond Jervois, 1877 (3)

Sell the blooming thing ... she is no use and only a source of expense, but to lay her up is neither one thing or the others. Either keep her going or sell her.

Letter to Observer, 1st July, 1893 (4)

6.1 Early Naval Considerations 1854-1883

In the middle of the 19th century the colonies were wrestling with the problems of naval defence, as much as with the question of military protection. British naval supremacy was taken for granted, and with it went the belief that the first line of defence, the guarding of the sea lanes, was the responsibility of the Royal Navy. The second and third lines of defence constituted protection of approaches to the coastal areas, and harbour defences. The fourth and fifth lines of defence consisted of coastal fortifications and the military forces of the colonies. The second and third lines of defence were the grey areas of colonial defence policy, involving as they did the question of the extent to which the colonies should participate in the defence of their territorial waters.

Throughout the sixties and seventies the colonies remained uncertain regarding naval defence. Victoria considered her naval forces as an extension of her military shore defences, and a means of protecting Port Phillip Bay rather than her territorial waters. H.M.C.S. Cerberus was unsuitable for operation in even relatively open waters. With 1900 tons of her dead weight above the water line a list of anything more than 10° could have capsized her. She was a monitor-type vessel, suitable for harbour defence only, and thus a supplement to the coastal artillery.

Until the mid-seventies, South Australians tended to view sea-going defences in terms of floating batteries - an extension of normal military coastal defences. Except for the Wallaroo area, where hostile ships might have been able to replenish their coal supplies, the vital area in the

Colony was the Adelaide plains. Fortifications built from South Australian raw materials, by South Australian labour, were considered preferable to warships - costly to buy and costly to maintain - unless the ships were to serve as support of such fortifications. It was in this context that B.T. Finnis considered naval defence in 1858 (5). The first Hart Commission, in 1858, generally agreed, except for making some vague references to co-operation with Royal Navy (6). Four years later, Colonel Blyth recommended the stationing of a gun boat 'at the outer bar' of the Port River (7). Recommendations for various other vessels followed (8) (9). The necessity for some form of naval force had been recognised since the fifties. Why then did it take South Australians thirty years to achieve a naval capability?

Part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the apparent contradictions in British naval policy, generally. The fortress England concept of the middle sixties not only required the withdrawal of Imperial forces from the colonies and their concentration on English soil, it also relegated the Royal Navy to a defensive role (10). No one in South Australia seemed to appreciate that there was little, if any, need for a naval defence capability in the South West Pacific, since Vladivostock, icebound for three to four months every year, was 4,900 miles from the nearest Australian port of any consequence (Brisbane), and the British China Station lay between the two ports (11).

At the same time, the Royal Navy was faced with certain police duties, which included control of the labour traffic in the Pacific and the occasional punitive action, a task the colonists did appreciate. The execution of these police duties had led to a fragmentation of the ship-building

effort, and thus to appreciable increases in naval estimates, without adding to the fighting strength of the navy as an instrument of Imperial defence strategy. Thus on one hand, England constructed heavy naval units and, later in the century, battleships which, by virtue of their superior fire power,\* were able to drive speedier, but smaller, ships with less fire power, off the seas (12). On the other hand, England had to build small units, gun boats and flat bottom monitors, for service in and around river estuaries, and protected (land-locked) bays. These small vessels were what the colonies thought they needed.

It was unfortunate that the colonies themselves were uncertain of the legal position of men-of-war maintained by a colony. When, in 1860, Victoria commissioned Her Majesty's Colonial Steam Sloop Victoria, enquiries in London revealed that only Admiralty vessels would be recognised as vessels of war. Assurances that the position would change when proper legislation enabled the colonies to have their own naval vessels (13), foreshadowed the Colonial Naval Defence Act, passed by the Imperial Parliament in 1865. The Act empowered the colonies to procure, maintain, man and use their own vessels, which could be induced into the Royal Navy for service beyond colonial territorial waters only by order-in-council from the British Government. The Act also empowered the colonies to raise and maintain volunteers to form part of the Royal Naval Reserve.

\* Superior fire power, in the eighties and early nineties, was achieved by the introduction of cordite and rifled, breech loading, long barrelled naval guns, which increased range considerably. This technical development constituted a threat, not only to smaller naval units, but also to the then existing coastal fortifications.



As far as Britain was concerned, the Colonial Naval Defence Act originated in much the same way as the recall of the legions. Sir Charles Dilke, 'foe of the garrison system but no anti-imperialist' (14) argued that the Australian colonies should contribute towards the maintenance of the navy, and that the share should increase as merchant shipping increased (15). Similarly, Sir Edward Cardwell sponsored the Act to encourage a greater colonial participation in defence duties (16). But the overriding reason in the early sixties was economy. The new naval policy was the counterpart of the Imperial garrison policy and with it formed a uniform pattern. Withdrawal of the garrisons, acceptance of naval subsidies from dependent governments (India), and the Colonial Naval Defence Act, were all implemented to reduce the financial burden on the British treasury. Encouragement of local self-defence was very much a secondary consideration. It was in this light that the colonies, with the possible exception of Victoria, saw the Colonial Naval Defences Act and their reaction was one of indifference. However, when it became known that Victoria was to be given the Cerberus on very favourable financial terms, South Australians immediately suggested that the Imperial Government might perhaps 'extend similar favourable considerations to the defenceless state of South Australia ... as has been given to Victoria' (17), to which Chandos from the Colonial Office somewhat sarcastically replied, whether he 'may understand ... that the Government of South Australia [was] willing to come forward as Victoria has done with regard to Naval Defence ' (18).

The significance of the arrival of the Cerberus in Australian waters in 1871 was not lost on South Australians.

Whenever the question of colonial defence comes to be discussed ... due credit will be given to Victoria for foresight in laying foundation of an Australian fleet ... She [the Cerberus] is not merely to be regarded as a contribution from the Home government to an aspiring colony ambitious whilst yet under Imperial tutelage to have some hand in the protection of her own shores, but as a nucleus of what in the future will be the principle of the national defence of Australia (19)\*

These words predicted that the Cerberus would be the beginning of the Australian fleet. They also foreshadowed questions, which were not to be resolved till the advent of the Australian Naval Defence Agreement of 1887. These questions were: should the colonial naval forces become an alternative to the Royal Navy squadron on the Australia Station, or should they form an integral part of the Royal Navy, and, secondly, should the colonial naval forces be provided at Imperial or at colonial cost, or by some contribution from each? It appears, in fact, that when South Australians did finally acquire their own naval defence capability, they did not see the role of their own naval force quite as clearly as the foregoing issues would imply. Although in the late eighties there were some objections, that the naval agreement rendered South Australian naval efforts redundant, the defence policy, established by Jervois, showed that South Australia's defence problem was unique, and warranted a different approach to the question of protecting its territorial waters from that taken by other colonies.

For a few years, the naval defence problem rested. It was briefly revived in 1876 by the report of the Third Finnis Commission (20), which recommended the purchase of three shallow-draft, twin-screw gun boats, each mounting an eighteen inch-gun. At the same time, the South Australian Government, very much against the wishes of the parliamentarians, obtained quotations for two types of gun boats from E.J.

\* Author's Italics.

Reed, M.P., formerly chief design engineer with the Royal Navy (21).

Inability to choose between various types of vessels showed that the South Australian Government did not, itself, appreciate the defence issues involved, and very wisely awaited the outcome of the Jervois/Scratchley investigation. Jervois approached the problem from first principles, and understood the problem better than the Victorians, who thought in terms of port defences, that is, in terms of the third and fourth lines of defence, rather than in terms of protecting their territorial waters, the second line of defence. Jervois was to say in retrospect, six or seven years later, 'I consider naval means to be the principal element of defence' (22). He saw the defence of the colony as a true naval problem, which had to be solved by the colony itself, because the Imperial naval squadron, with its Imperial commitments, would not be available 'for the special defence of any one Colony or any portion of the coast' (23), nor was the Admiralty prepared to second any of the ship units of the Australia Station to a particular colony (24). Consequently, Jervois rejected both the Cerberus type vessels and the floating battery suggested by E.J. Reed. Instead, he recommended an iron-clad vessel, of the type built in England in 1875 for the Portugese Government. This ship had a displacement tonnage of 2,500 tons, was 220 feet long, 40 feet wide and drew about 25 feet of water, and its main armament consisted of two 18-ton guns on fixed mountings. The speed of the vessel was about 13 knots (25).

In 1877, Jervois left for England to present the South Australian case for a subsidy to purchase a ship. Not that Britain was likely to contribute more than 50 per cent,

and then only if

South Australia [showed] what efforts it was making for self defence in other ways ... and that expenditure on an ironclad would be better than on guns or other kind of ships and that torpedoes and batteries were insufficient to defend harbours ... . (26)

Britain was by no means convinced that the Colony had to be defended by naval means.

Although Jervois argued well, emphasising that the more naval protection was provided by the colonies, the less demands would be made on the Royal Navy, the Admiralty refused to admit the validity of South Australia's claim and insisted that where Victoria deserved the subsidy, South Australia did not. Victoria had spent large sums on defence and had provided her first ship, H.M.C.S. Victoria, at her own expense, and had been prepared, prior to the Colonial Naval Defence Act, to place the ship under the command of the senior (Imperial) naval officer. Victoria had created a naval reserve brigade, and was considering the construction of a graving dock. South Australia, on the other hand, had never before shown much interest in paying even part of the naval expenses involved in the defence of the coast line. In 1874 South Australia had been offered H.M.S. Rosario as a training vessel, free of charge, but the Colony had not been prepared to meet the incidental costs of the venture (27)\*. In the end, the English Cabinet did agree to recommend a 50 per cent subsidy,

\* In 1874 Governor Musgrave had felt that an old warship might be suitable for a boys' reformatory school. In response to his request, the Admiralty offered the 673 ton sloop Rosario which, however, appeared too good for a reformatory, and Musgrave felt it might be better used as a nautical training school. The Admiralty had no objections but when it became apparent that sending the crew back to England would cost £2,500, that the repairs would cost about £6,000, and that the vessel was too big for a training school, (29) and too small for a reformatory, the idea was rapidly abandoned.

despite the fact that no other colony had asked for one. However, South Australia would have had to establish the necessity for naval defences, in preference to land and/or coastal defences.

Suddenly, on the 28.6.1878, Jervois announced to Sir Herbert Mead of the Colonial Office that the Colony no longer needed assistance, and not to give the subsidy another thought (28). It appears that Jervois had heard, we don't know how, that the Argentine Government intended disposing of two of its ships, the Andes and the La Plata, for £27,000 each, including all stores. The ships were supposed to have been built in England in 1874, by the firm of Laird at Birkenhead, and carried two rifled 12-ton guns. The annual cost for crew and maintenance was of the order of £7,000 per ship. Jervois felt that one of these ships would be ideal for South Australia, but the British authorities advocated utmost caution. 'Since we are likely to be financially involved, let us be careful'. Subsequent enquiries made at Buenos Aires, through the British senior naval officer, elicited no information regarding the alleged Argentine intention (30), while investigations by South Australia's own agent failed to even trace the origin of the two ships (31) (32) (33). Jervois might have been the victim of a misunderstanding or of some swindler. At any rate, nothing more was heard of the matter, except for Jervois' brief explanation that he had been advised on 17th June, 1878, that 'the Argentine government would not sell their ships at present' (34).

The naval debate in South Australia hibernated till 1882, when Jervois reconsidered his earlier recommendations for a suitable vessel. Instead of the ironclad ship, he now

suggested a lightly armoured vessel with a speed of 14 to 15 knots, carrying amidships a breech loading 7-ton gun. As secondary armament, he advocated four 40-pounder breech loading guns, and two Nordenfeldt machine guns. The ship could be constructed by Sir William Armstrong - Co. for £40,000 to £50,000. In addition, Jervois advocated two torpedo carrying steam launches (35). The government and legislature finally agreed to his proposals for both a warship and 14 torpedo defences (36). The Register welcomed the move (37), and the Observer claimed that Jervois' revised proposals were just what the press in South Australia had itself advocated all along (38). Even General Downes either bending to public opinion, or for once truly understanding the strategic and tactical issues involved, supported Jervois to the fullest extent (39).

Thus South Australia was ready to enter the naval club, ironically, largely due to the efforts of military, rather than naval experts:

6.2 H.M.C.S. Protector and the Men who Sailed in Her

When the Protector sailed into the Port River on 30th September, 1884, she was, for her size, one of the most powerful ships afloat. Designed and built by Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Company at Newcastle-on-Tyne, she was launched early in 1884 and left England on her maiden voyage in June of that year. She had cost £65,039.3.6 to build and £8,270 to bring to South Australia (40). A twin-screw vessel of about 920 tons with an indicated horsepower of 1600, she had a speed of 14 to 14.5 knots, carried one 8-inch and seven 6-inch guns, both breech-loading, and her subsidiary armament consisted of 3-pdr quick firing, and five 'terrible' Gatling guns. In 1891 following the recommendation of Admiral Fairfax, flag officer of the Australia Station, certain modifications were made, to enable the 3-inch gun to fire over an arc of 290°, instead of 30°, and to make the four 3-pdr. quick firing guns more effective by mounting them in the place of the Gatling guns, which were in turn to be placed fore and aft of the bridge. The cost of these modifications and other repairs was £5,850.3.9 (41).

The purchase of the warship, perhaps the biggest single expenditure the Colony was to incur at any one time in respect of her defence, came about in a rather curious fashion. In July 1882, J.C. Bray, the Chief Secretary, disclosed that he had instructed the agent-general to obtain quotes for a warship and for torpedo defences. The reply quoted £65,000 for designing and building the ship, about £8,000 to bring her out, and some £5,000 for the torpedoes. Bray then suggested that, if there were no objections (42), he would telegraph the order to London. A week later the government moved that '... it is expedient to provide immediately for

the better defence of the Colony by ordering a war vessel and torpedoes, ...' (43).

And so the South Australian Navy was created, almost unnoticed, and undebated. Though documentary evidence is almost totally lacking, several possible explanations for the phenomenon offer themselves. Perhaps the policy makers, as well as the public, were quite content to accept, and act upon, the advice of the experts. Or perhaps the ministry seized this opportunity to confound public criticism of its earlier reluctance to take steps to ensure the safety of the Colony. On the other hand, those politicians who believed sea-borne artillery raids to be the most likely threat to the Colony in general and to members of the wealthy commercial sector of the community in particular, might have considered the purchase of the warship as an insurance policy against such an event. Hence the wholehearted support from parliamentarians in the legislative council. Opinions expressed by a few radicals, that banks ought to pay for ships (44), seem to lend support to this interpretation. Actually, there were dissenters who would have none of this naval business, and wanted the ship sold as soon as possible (45), a sentiment which gained ground in 1887 when the South Australian contribution to the Auxiliary Squadron was being debated (46). Or perhaps the purchase of the Protector was considered an effort, costly but bearable in a booming economy, which did not affect the lives of individual citizens nearly as much as any attempt to increase the efficiency of the military would have done.

Whatever the case may have been, South Australians were certainly proud of their warship and, naturally, wanted all the trimmings, including pictures of the Queen and the



Prince of Wales in the ward room, which were approved by London after a lengthy discussion between the Admiralty, the Colonial Office and Royal Household officers (47). A specially designed blue ensign, authorised by an Admiralty warrant on 14th March, 1889, had on the fly a picture of Britannia and a kneeling native, symbolizing England's relationship to her colonies(48). Initially, no authority existed for wearing the blue pennant because no legislative action had been taken prior to the arrival of the Protector to define her status as a vessel of war in accordance with Section 3 of the Colonial/Defence Act of 1865, a shortcoming remedied by An Act for Commissioning of Ships of War and the Establishment of a Naval Brigade, or the Naval Discipline Act, 1884 for short(49)

The Naval Discipline Act, 1884 empowered the governor to commission ships and to raise naval forces for service beyond the territorial limits of the Colony. The naval personnel was to be engaged on a voluntary basis only, that is, no compulsory naval service was contemplated. In order to make service in the naval brigade financially attractive, the pay rates originally envisaged were considerably higher than those for both the permanent and non-permanent components of the army. The military commandant protested. 'The principle of pay for a volunteer should be reimbursement for his trouble, less holiday amusement and little out of pocket expenses ... but not enough to make it worthwhile for the loafer to join for the sake of money ...' (50).

Public enthusiasm for the navy knew no bounds. The ministry and the legislature went on a tour of inspection (51), and seaports in the Colony clamoured for the Protector to show the flag, so that between October and December the ship called

at all major South Australian ports (52). The trip must have been quite costly for the captain and the officers, since cabinet refused to approve an allowance for entertaining members of parliament or local dignitaries (52a.)

In the official opinions of Admirals Fairfax and Scott (53), South Australia's navy had a certain air of competence, not quite as evident in the Colony's army, and probably due to the efforts of Commander John Phillips Walcot (54), who was South Australia's naval commandant from 1884 to 1893. However, the very nature of the service lent itself to the implementation of strict time tables and training schedules.\*

Finding that the Protector's trained personnel could not be fully employed in peace time, the naval commandant embarked on a policy of empire building, suggesting to the government that the Marine Board should be abolished and its functions brought under naval control, thus usefully employing his personnel at no extra cost to the government. Walcot also recommended that the harbour launch, Governor Musgrave, be manned by naval personnel (55). These recommendations followed a rather ambitious naval program, submitted a year earlier, which envisaged, in addition to the Protector, two gun vessels, plus four Whitehead and four Spar torpedo boats, manned by 29 officers and 262 naval ratings (56).

The depression of the early nineties forced the South Australian Government to reduce defence expenditure. Naval training activities were curtailed. In 1891 the Protector undertook only one cruise, of 14 days duration, but even that consumed 25 tons of coal (57). There were no cruises in 1892, and only a short trip to the West Coast in January/February 1893 (58). By July, 1893, the chief-secretary ordered the

\* Vide Appendix H.

laying up of H.M.C.S. Protector and the discharge of officers and crew, with Commander Walcot remaining on half pay. Walcot replied with his resignation. The discharges took effect as from the end of July, and a bonus of several months' pay was given to officers and men in lieu of the completion of their agreements. At the same time strenuous but unsuccessful attempts were made to dispose of the ship and to sell the torpedoes. So the Protector stayed, doing little or nothing (59) until she sailed for China in 1900. For the next thirty years she served as a training ship, and was eventually sold by the Royal Australian Navy to a private firm. In 1931 she was bought as a wool carrier, renamed Sidney, and travelled between Melbourne and Geelong. In July, 1943, she was bought by the United States Navy to carry stores to New Guinea, but she suffered heavy damage en route and did not reach her destination. Towed to Heron Island in April, 1944, she ended her days on a reef as a breakwater (60).

However, to return to 1893 and the change in the South Australian naval command. After Walcot's departure, Lieutenant William Rooke Creswell was appointed naval commandant. He was born at Gibraltar in 1852 and entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1866. After a distinguished career, spent mostly in small ships, engaged in combatting the slave trade in Africa and pirate activity off Penang, Creswell was retired in 1878 due to ill health. In an attempt to settle on the land in Queensland, he tried his hand at sugar farming, droving, and even journalism, in the meantime acquiring a valuable colonial background. In 1885, Creswell visited Adelaide and accepted an appointment as senior lieutenant in the South

Australian naval service. He cemented his ties with the Colony by marrying, in 1888, the daughter of Mr. Justice Stow. In 1893 he became the naval commandant of South Australia, and was promoted to captain in the colonial service a year later, and then briefly took command in Queensland at the turn of the century (61). In 1904 Creswell became director of the Commonwealth naval forces, and in 1911 he was appointed First Naval Member of the Commonwealth Naval Board, with the rank of rear-admiral. He retired in 1919 in Victoria, and died in 1933 as Vice-Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell, C.M.G., K.C.M.G., K.B.E. (62).

Creswell's impact was perhaps more significant on the federal scene than in terms of South Australian defence. His suggestion, to substitute an Australian Royal Naval Reserve for the annual cash contributions under the 1887 Naval Agreement, was a revolutionary step towards drawing Australian citizens into the sphere of Empire defence. Creswell's talents in public relations assured the South Australian navy of as much, if not more, government encouragement as the army was wont to get. For instance, his lucid way of explaining to the laymen, that cost savings were possible through planned modernisation of the Protector's armament, brought about a speedy appropriation of the required £3,000 - £4,000 (62a).

Like many of his military counterparts, Creswell had become an Australian nationalist. This perhaps explains his anti-Admiralty attitude, which became apparent when he came into close contact with other South Australian federalists, among them Charles Kingston. From a naval point of view he was, by virtue of his training and experience, the ideal man. Having served in small ships, engaged in the defence of

coastal waters, he was a second line of defence expert. Actually, both Creswell and the Admiralty had similar views on the navy's role: that of a policeman, safe-guarding law and order, protecting commerce, showing the flag, and trying to control slave traffic off African and Pacific coasts. The doctrine of fleet concentration had not yet assumed the importance it was to acquire under Admiral Fisher (62b).

Creswell's successor as naval commandant of South Australia, in April 1910, was Captain C.J. Clare, who was not a Royal Navy officer, having been apprenticed to a firm of ship-owners in London. On his arrival in South Australia in 1860, he joined the Marine Board. In 1884 he was given command of the Governor Musgrave, then considered a naval auxiliary. He was at the same time acting as assistant harbour-master (63). His contribution to South Australian defence must have been negligible. At any rate, no record of it seems to exist.

#### The Naval Brigade

The first officers in South Australia's navy were Royal Navy officers on half-pay. Apart from Lieutenant E.C. Hobkirk, there was a Lieutenant H.O. Lundle, a Chief-Engineer, T.B. Jordan, and Second Engineer, W. Clarkson. Enrolments under the Naval Discipline Act 1884 commenced in March, 1885. The naval brigade consisted of the permanent naval force and the naval reserve, whose pay rates\* were based on daily drills. The first drill parade for the naval reserve was held on 3rd May, 1885 (64), and the whole brigade, complete with carbines

\* Vide Appendix H.

and sword bayonets, made its first public appearance on the Queen's Accession Day the same year (65).

Both the manning of the ship, and recruiting for the naval reserve, presented some difficulties. Of a complement of 90, the commandant was only able to get 56 on board. Of these, a dozen or more were men serving a month full time, in lieu of weekly drills (66). Efforts to recruit forty able seamen for three months, in the hope that sufficient naval reserve recruits would be forthcoming to make up the deficiency (67), proved futile, and the government, with parliament's reluctant approval, decided to increase the naval reserve establishment from 100 to 150, widening the scope for recruiting and, hopefully, improving the crews' efficiency (68).

The naval force seems to have had a greater share of disciplinary difficulties than were experienced by the army. Possibly, the Naval Discipline Act gave the naval commandant insufficient power, and a rating, who had knocked down the commanding officer, would receive only half the sentence imposed on a civilian committing a similar offence (69). The major disciplinary shortcoming of the act was its lack of provision for summary jurisdiction and, in the words of Walcot, a 'sort of compromise between trials by common law and proper court martial without the good points of either'. (70) The naval commandants' recommendations for correcting such shortcomings were ignored.

Sailors of the permanent ship's company, like members of the permanent artillery, lived in a world of their own, out of touch with the community. They were not citizens in the accepted sense and, therefore, merited little attention from the press, or from the government, for that matter.

Only one sailor earned personal attention. He was an able seaman from Dunedin, named Phineas Philip Davies, who died on board the Protector as the result of an accident. Since he had, on joining, given his religion as Roman Catholic, he was buried accordingly. Actually he was Jewish. On his mother's request the Adelaide rabbi, the Reverend Boaz, made the necessary representations to the Government to have him dis-interred and re-buried (71).

From the seventies onwards, the Colony of South Australia saw the need for small naval units, which she could raise under the provisions of the Colonial Naval Defence Act, 1865, an act passed by Great Britain to strengthen her own naval capability without weakening the naval defence of the Empire, generally.

Consequently, the Colony, prodded by the untiring efforts of a military officer, Major-General Sir William Jervois, purchased in 1884 a warship, H.M.C.S. Protector, specifically built for tasks which the Royal Navy was no longer inclined to undertake. Thus South Australia's naval force was unique in concept; it was conceived as a second line of defence, to protect the approaches to the Colony's territorial waters. It had the capability of fulfilling this role. On the other hand, the Naval Discipline Act implied that the South Australian naval force may, some day, act in co-operation with the rest of the Australian colonies.

CHAPTER VIITOWARDS NATIONAL CO-OPERATION

... A time might come when these colonies conscious of their power and of the interests at stake may be disinclined to await attack after war shall have broken out and will initiate such operations as may make the Enemies of the Empire in the Pacific and China Seas and Indian Ocean look after their own possessions, by finding these occupied at or near to their own ports. ... It may be truly said that Australasia begins with New Zealand and ends with Hong Kong.

Major-General E. Harding Steward,  
1889 (1)

Federation for defence may be forced upon [the colonies] by the inconvenience of war ... at a much earlier period than political federation.

Major-General M.F. Downes, 1884 (2)

... Members of the Conference pledge themselves to use all legitimate endeavours to procure the efficient fortifications and land defence of the several ports of the Australian Colonies, at the cost of the several Colonies interested ... .

Resolution passed at the Inter-  
Colonial Conference, Sydney, 1881 (3)



## 7.1 Federal Military Conferences and Defence Schemes

The Imperial garrison system in the 19th century had always treated the Australian colonies as a military entity, and besides, all Imperial garrisons were supervised centrally, so that all inspection procedures and reports always applied to Australia as a whole, and not to individual colonies (4). But national co-operation in defence was a relatively late development. It had to wait until adequate means of communication within the continent made such co-operation possible, and, more significantly, it had to wait for the growth of a national consciousness. Attempts by Earl Grey in the late forties to create a national consciousness had failed, because it was not an indigenous movement. It implied recognition of New South Wales as the senior colony. This, in turn, aroused fears that the smaller colonies might be dominated by New South Wales. Above all, there was little evidence that federation would bring any direct benefits to the colonies. Earl Grey's efforts, in fact, produced a strong reaction against the idea of a unified Australia. By 1856, the colonies, now independent,

began to lay an absurd stress upon the importance of their new position, treating it as too sacred to be sacrificed in the slightest degree even for the nobler object of national union. (5)

In addition, Pax Britanica<sup>n</sup> rendered the Australian colonies free from these external pressures which are so often associated with the growth of nationhood. Even the Canadian provinces despite the fundamental division between their inhabitants, had developed a national consciousness in the presence of a powerful, hostile neighbour (6).

Gradually, the activities of other powers in the Pacific induced an awareness that unification, or at least co-operation in defence, might have distinct advantages. It was felt, for instance, that, had a federal government annexed New Guinea on 4th April, 1883 - instead of Mr. Chester, on behalf of the Colony of Queensland - Great Britain would not have been able to repudiate the action (7). These, and similar sentiments, prompted the colonies to at least discuss mutual problems around the conference table.

Although inter-colonial conferences called to discuss the federation in <sup>the</sup> eighties and nineties did place defence considerations on their agenda, it must not be imagined that problems of defence weighed heavily on the scale of priorities. The conferences did not necessarily reflect international crises, nor was defence awareness the result of fears of direct aggression. In fact, Australian defence awareness, at least until the nineties, exhibited an alternating pattern: panic at the height of a crisis and indifference as soon as the danger, real or imagined, had passed. As communications improved, awareness of international crises brought the problem of defence more and more to the foreground, and by the late eighties the danger of involvement in war had heightened, due to the emergence of European empires in the Pacific.

However, the federation movement was by no means based on defence considerations. There were too many inter-colonial jealousies and the reluctance of one colony to support another. Colonial self-defence to many Australians meant the protection of their capital cities, their own seats of government and centres of colonial wealth. Thus, in times of peace a unified system of federal defence seemed unnecessary, while

in a crisis the capital cities became isolated garrisons, too far distant from each other to offer mutual assistance, and too remote for British aid to be effective. Yet, the colonies were agreed on one premise: all attempts at local self-reliance would be pointless should Britain lose her supremacy in the Pacific.

However, Britain, and to a lesser extent, the colonies, felt that British supremacy in the Pacific could only be maintained if they themselves were willing to contribute to Empire safety in their part of the world. This could only be achieved by a measure of national co-operation in defence, a move which had been urged both by Imperial defence experts, Jervois, Scratchley, Edwards and Tryon, and by the gentle prodding of the Colonial Defence Committee, not merely as an individual colonial necessity, but as a national and, indeed, as an Imperial requirement. Consequently, the inter-colonial conferences were obliged to make at least token moves towards national defence co-operation and hence paved the way for the various military conferences which were to generate plans for a unified military structure and for the establishment of federal forts.

For South Australia, inter-colonial co-operation in defence matters began in 1866, when the South Australian commandant, Colonel John Hesqueth Biggs, was invited to observe the Easter camp in Victoria (8). However, for the next fifteen years the Colony's defence efforts were at a low ebb and saw no federal co-operation of any kind. It was not until 1880, that the importance of defence on a federal scale was again recognised, and even then the notion did not come from Australian sources. For instance, the Royal Commission on the Defence

of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad 1879 (Carnarvon Commission) stressed the need for standardising small arms and ordnance specifications, lest the individual colonies be forced to depend on private contractors for supplies (9).

In 1880, the New South Wales Royal Commission on Defence, although primarily concerned with New South Wales, invited other colonial commandants to participate. Only South Australia was not represented. At that time the Colony's anti-federal sentiments were at their peak. Nevertheless, the Governor, Sir William Jervois, did comment favourably on the general proposals of the Commission 'as tending towards the recognition of Federal principles in questions relating to defences' (10). He agreed with the proposed appointment of an Imperial officer as inspector-general of Australian land forces, who would act as military adviser to the colonial governments. However, Jervois opposed the organising of Australia-wide military assemblies, since individual contingents would not have been sufficiently trained to benefit from such an exercise. While he welcomed the suggestion for a central military school, he foresaw difficulties in obliging part-time officers to be absent from their homes for prolonged periods. As for the establishment of a central arms manufacturing depot and of a federal artillery regiment, both were considered premature, because continental transport facilities were lacking.

In South Australia, the senior military officers, unlike their political superiors, always thought federally. For instance, Downes recommended that the Defence Act 65/1866 be amended to enable the forces to serve anywhere within Australia (11), and he also suggested that South Australia should contact other colonies with the view to having all the permanent forces organised on a uniform basis (12). Both these suggestions were

rejected as premature and too difficult to implement (13). Similarly, Brigadier-General Owen's broad recommendations for a general Australian defence scheme, to be operative in times of war, with separate training in time of peace, fell on to deaf ears (14). Inter-colonial jealousies were still too strong.

South Australia was not the only colony to oppose practical steps towards federal defence legislation, even after events in New Guinea and the New Hebrides had demonstrated the necessity for federal action. Informal discussions on board H.M.S. Nelson, between Rear-Admiral G. Tryon, commanding the Australia Station, and representatives from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, on questions of common naval defence problems and means to solve them, showed that the eastern colonies were not prepared to accept any reciprocal obligations, either (15).

If there were stirrings here and there which suggested that the federal nature of defence was gradually being recognised, it was not national consciousness, but commercial and other parochial interests which predominated. The township of Wentworth, for instance, held a number of public meetings and passed resolutions (eventually printed on silk and forwarded to the premiers of all the colonies), suggesting that the town was an ideal, central location for a small-arms factory, a federal ammunition works and a federal arsenal (16). Wentworth residents went so far as to suggest 'that in future Wentworth ... shall be the capital and arsenal of Federated Australia' (17). It would appear that Wentworth's suggestion was ignored.

The informal discussions between Sir Henry Parkes and senior South Australian politicians in September 1887

might perhaps be regarded as the first inter-colonial military discussions at government level (18); yet no action followed for at least two years. Then, in 1889, Sir Henry Parkes reopened the question of federal co-operation by suggesting a consultation between the military commandants (19). The colonies temporised. Queensland hesitated, New South Wales suggested postponing the conference until General Edwards' report (20) was received; while South Australia agreed with the New South Wales opinion, the Colony felt that a political conference, to determine the terms of reference, should precede the consultation among defence experts (21).

Finally, arrangements were made for the conference to assemble in Melbourne, on 17th November 1890. From there the delegates were to proceed to Albany by mail steamer, and thence to Darwin and Thursday Island. These arrangements were made not, as Victoria wanted, through the Federal Council, but directly between the governments concerned (22), the reason, according to Sir Henry Parkes, being that the Federal Council had no executive power to arrange such a conference (23). The question of Darwin was an after thought, since South Australia at that time desperately wanted Darwin to be included in the scheme for the federal forts\* to be established in co-operation with Great Britain (24).

The Melbourne conference of the military commandants concerned itself mainly with the recommendations of the Edwards report and the comments on this report submitted to the Colonial Office by the Colonial Defence Committee (25). Edwards had recommended a brigade formation as the basis for a federal

\* Vide Section 7.2

military organisation. At the time, a brigade comprised two regiments of infantry (each composed of two battalions, each of four companies), one regiment of cavalry (with six companies), two batteries of field artillery (of six guns each) and one field company of engineers. Queensland and South Australia were each to furnish one brigade, New South Wales and Victoria three each. In the event of war, the Queensland and northern New South Wales brigades were to make up the 1st Division, and the two remaining New South Wales brigades, the second Division. The third Division was to be formed from two Victorian brigades, and the remaining Victorian and the South Australian brigades would constitute the fourth Division. From a peace-time brigade establishment of 1910 all ranks, and 3,000 to 5,000 all ranks in times of war, the Australian force could be expanded to 30,000 or 40,000 men by enrolling personnel from the rifle companies. Such a force would have been equivalent in strength to a European army corps.

However, the Colonial Defence Committee disagreed with the concept, insisting that no threat was likely to materialise which would warrant a force of such magnitude. A small, highly mobile force would be more advantageous, as well as being economically and organisationally easier to plan for in peace time, and more easily employed in an offensive role. The Committee also felt that the rifle companies, while perhaps competent in marksmanship, would only swell the cadre battalions with untrained personnel. It would have been preferable to create proper reserves from personnel who had passed through the paid components of the military forces. Finally, the Committee felt that European style cavalry was unsuitable and should be replaced by mounted infantry. The Committee agreed with Edwards' other proposals, including proposals for the

appointment of an inspecting officer,\* for a standardised uniform, organisation and armament, and for a common defence act, for amalgamation of the permanent forces into a fortress corps, for the establishment of a federal military college and a small arms factory, and finally, for a uniform railway gauge.

The colonial military commandants agreed, basically, with Edwards, but diverged from his recommendations in two aspects. They advocated a mobile force of 12,000, consisting of twenty-four infantry battalions of 500 men each, formed into four companies. In addition, they questioned the desirability of a federal defence scheme. This had to wait until 1894. As for the South Australian Government, it generally agreed with the recommendations, but where cost sharing was involved, consented only after the principle of payment on a population basis was established (27).

Victoria began to implement some of Edwards' recommendations in 1891. It organised a federal military course to teach tactics, field fortifications, military topography and military law. But in South Australia, as late as 1893, the commandant, Colonel J.M. Gordon, recommended unsuccessfully that a South Australian contingent should be allowed to participate in a federal encampment. The cost of sending fifteen officers and 222 men would have been of the order of £785. The government could not justify such expenditure (28).

\* The Colonial Defence Committee and the War Office saw in the colonial forces a military potential, which could be used for Empire defence in a joint operation, or even on its own. The role of the inspecting officer was to provide Britain with reliable information regarding the likelihood and practicability of colonial forces participating effectively in the defence of the Empire. Hence British willingness to pay for Edwards' visit (26).



The mile-stone in national defence co-operation was the Military Conference for Australian Federal Defence, a three day meeting held in Sydney from 24th to 26th October, 1894 (29), to which each colony, with the exception of Western Australia, sent its senior military officer. Major-General A.B. Tulloch (New South Wales) presided. The members were Major-General E.T.W. Hutton (Victoria), Colonel E.R. Drury (Queensland), Colonel J.M. Gordon (South Australia), Captain P.R.W. Parkes, R.N. (Tasmania), with Major W.T. Bridges acting as Secretary.

The Conference attempted to lay down general principles for the defence of the continent, including a detailed organisation of the forces. In contrast to its predecessor of 1890, the 1894 conference based its deliberations on two basic assumptions: that a Federal Council of Defence would be the political executive, and that the Royal Navy would constitute the first line of defence outside territorial waters (the three-mile limit), but would not be responsible for the defence of the shores and port facilities. Tulloch and Hutton differed in their definition of a possible threat, Tulloch being sceptical of Hutton's interpretation: an invader coming to Australia with a force of all arms. But then Tulloch did not admit the possibility of the Royal Navy losing command of the sea, whereas Hutton was not altogether convinced of the navy's omnipotence. It was agreed, in principle, that Australia's task would be to safeguard the conditions under which the Royal Navy could fulfil its task. 'Australia had therefore to be prepared out of its own military resources to protect the naval bases, to secure the important strategical positions and to guard all that the navy needs for its free action at sea' (30). The commandants recommended the for-

mation of an Active Defence Force for employment anywhere within Australia, and a force for passive defence, a volunteer type force similar to the one existing in England. The Active Defence Force was to be under federal, and the Passive Defence Force under local control. The Conference dearly wanted to frame conditions for the Active Defence Force, or Federal Defence Force, in such a manner as to make it available for service anywhere, that is beyond Australian territorial limits, but feared possible political repercussions (31). The compulsory principle in form of universal service obligation was embodied in the draft agreement, as were the broad functions of the controlling authority, the Council of Australian Federal Defence (32).

What, then, was the historical significance of the Conference? Its deliberations gave South Australia the framework for its Defences Act, 1895 (33). The Conference had based its recommendations on the Queensland act of 1884 and the amendments of 1891 (34), particularly with regard to the principle of compulsory service. Recognition of this principle in the 1895 South Australian act enabled a federal defence scheme to be implemented smoothly. It was in this respect that the South Australian act was in advance of the Queensland legislation, a fact duly noted by the Colonial Defence Committee, particularly with reference to the three classes of men which could be called up, the territorial limitations of service, and the placing of South Australian troops under Imperial command, or 'under the orders of any other officer then in command of the Land Forces of any other of the Australian colonies or Tasmania' (35). To conform with the Federal Draft Agreement, the South Australian act

legalised two forces, the Active Military Force, corresponding to the proposed Federal Active Defence Force, and the Reserve Military Force, corresponding to the Passive Defence Force. As far as the reserve force was concerned, South Australian legislation was in advance even of the Colonial Defence Committee's recommendations: the passive defence force was truly a reserve, of members who had first served two years in the active force, and not, as both Hutton and Tulloch envisaged, composed of volunteers. Moreover, it was organically linked to the active force. However, where the general concept of federal action for defence was concerned, South Australians still showed little interest.

In January 1896 the New South Wales Government invited the other colonies to send military representatives to Sydney, to participate in an Inter-Colonial Military Committee (36), which was charged to enquire into the selection of a universal pattern of small arms, to review the report of the 1894 conference, and to consider subsequent suggestions for the establishment of small arms ordnance and ammunition factories. South Australia contributed a suggestion for the simplification of infantry drill (37).

Basically, the Inter-Colonial Military Committee upheld the recommendations of the two preceding conferences, except for a few changes in the proposed order of battle and the establishment of a small arms factory. The necessity for establishing a federal ammunition factory was also questioned because the Colonial Ammunition Company of Melbourne had always proved a satisfactory supplier. The South Australian suggestion of a revised drill procedure was

rejected, although it entailed no expense. Perhaps the most important recommendation by the Committee concerned the immediate assembly of colonial government representatives, to consider and accept on behalf of their governments the amended scheme for Australian federal defence, and to nominate without delay the proposed Council of Australian Federal Defence, whose duty it would be to appoint the Federal General Commanding (38). These recommendations amounted almost to federal political action, for which the time (in 1896) had not yet come. The Inter-Colonial Military Committee made its most practical contribution by defining a complete military organisation, both for peace and war time establishments (39).

There is no evidence that the conference of the Inter-Colonial Military Committee in January 1896, was accorded the recognition it merited, nor were any of the recommendations implemented. Undaunted, Victoria called a conference for December of the same year. The delegates, Major-General G.A. French (New South Wales), Colonel H. Gunter (Queensland), Colonel A. Wilson (Western Australia) and Colonel J.M. Gordon (South Australia), duly assembled, under the chairmanship of Major-General Sir Charles Hotted Smith of Victoria. Ostensibly concerned with the federal forts of Albany and Thursday Island, the conference agenda nevertheless included a number of items considered by previous conferences, but carefully avoided any political aspects. Instead, the Committee recommended that to create the proper machinery for dealing with defence matters, one colony should be elected to act 'as the medium of communication with the several governments' (40).

Again, there is little evidence that the premiers' conference, at Hobart in February 1897, took any notice of the

second Inter-Colonial Military Conference's report, except to reject the appointment of a consulting federal engineer officer (41), a post admirably filled by Scratchley in the seventies. Ironically, the lack of legitimate political machinery to implement the recommendations of the military, which had rendered earlier conferences ineffectual, was now replaced by uncertainty and reluctance to commit government funds to anything which might be changed by impending federation (42).

On the eve of federation the colonies were unwilling to co-operate, even in relatively minor defence matters. There was the petty wrangling over the appointment of an Inspector of Warlike Stores in London (43), and South Australia's reluctance to send an officer to an extended gunnery course, organised by New South Wales in 1897 (44). Similarly, South Australia at first refused to participate in the diamond jubilee celebrations, in London, in 1897 (45), eventually consenting to furnish a party of two officers and twenty-three other ranks (46) only because public enthusiasm for the idea of an all Australian contingent proved too strong. On the 26th April of that year, the Victorian and South Australian contingents paraded together through the streets of Adelaide, an event Colonel Gordon described as the first federal parade (47).

Nevertheless, towards the close of the century, the political climate grew more favourable to federal action. The co-operative planning efforts of the colonies towards a national military policy culminated in the conference of the military commandants, in September 1899. While dealing with the expeditionary force which might have had to be raised in the event of war in South Africa, the conference recommended

uniform rates of pay, uniform organisation, uniform pensions and compassionate allowances, for a force representing all arms and sufficiently large to always

remain intact as an Australian Contingent capable of acting alone or in concert with regular troops ... otherwise it would lose its identity by being scattered amongst other corps of the regular service or being tacked onto some other colonial contingent and thus have its identity destroyed. (48)

In actual fact, the Australian forces did not act as an entity, but this was due to Imperial insistence and not to colonial reluctance to co-operate. National co-operation was only achieved once, in the agreement reached by the colonies on the question of ammunition manufacture. The Colonial Ammunition Company Ltd had been invited, in 1887, to establish a cartridge factory in Australia. Two years later the factory went into production at Footscray, in Victoria (49). Satisfied with the product quality (50), South Australia voted to buy her ammunition in Australia (51) (52). An agreement between the Company and the colonies, entered into in March 1898 (53), has assured Australia's ammunition supply ever since.

Apart from the foregoing venture national co-operation in defence, particularly in military defence, remained in the planning stage. No concrete steps towards internal military arrangements could be taken until the Australian colonies provided the necessary political platform-federation. Outside defence experts, Jervois, Scratchley and Edwards, had pointed the way, and the gentle influence of the Colonial Defence Committee had guided the deliberations of the local professionals towards accepting that any federal defence scheme would presuppose annual revisions, uniform rates of pay, and standardised equipment, small arms and ordnance. The colonies also appreciated the importance of the federal forts and accepted them as a joint British and colonial responsibility, a national co-operative effort to ensure the safety of Empire communications,

## 7.2

The Federal Forts

Federal forts on the northern and southern coasts of the Australian continent came into existence late in the 19th century, having grown out of uneasiness over increasing non-British activities in the Pacific, and the realisation that, for local defence measures to be effective, Empire communications had to be made safe.

While the German annexation of New Guinea did not pose a direct threat to colonial safety, it did constitute a potential menace to Empire communications. This concern, shared by all the colonies, including New Zealand and Fiji, led to the formation of the Federal Council of Australasia, a loose federation of colonies, formalised by the British Federal Council of Australasia Act 1885, which was aimed at creating a representative colonial body, empowered to act on behalf of the colonies in matters the causes of which lay beyond their territorial limits. These matters included fishing rights, civil processes, enforcement of judgements, extradition and custody of offenders, quarantine, the influx of criminals and Australia's relations with her Pacific neighbours. This last factor induced the Council to sponsor agreements for the establishment and joint maintenance of federal forts at King George Sound and Thursday Island.

In the eighties and nineties, South Australia's attitude to the federal forts and their maintenance was still largely influenced by the commercial interests of the Colony, and not by any conscious awareness of a need for national or Empire defence. Thus, South Australia was indifferent to the federal fort on Thursday Island but anxious to have Darwin declared an Imperial station, and equally eager for Albany

(King George Sound) developed as a federal defence installation, as a direct safeguard for the Colony's trade. A contemporary historian, G. Blainey, referring to Dallas' theory of the Botany Bay settlement (54), says that

these military outposts were designed as springboards for guarding or promoting a trade route, not as beach heads for guarding or settling the interior.(55)

According to Blainey, British bases in Australia were the best safeguard in the face of non-British expansion in the Pacific,\* now that France controlled Mauritius and the United States had embarked upon maritime expansion to the south west. The strategic importance of a base to guard Torres Strait had been recognised early. As soon as Bass Strait was secured, British traders urged their government to establish an Australian Singapore. The traders' requests, reinforced by French activities in the area, led to the establishment of Fort Dundas on Melville Island, and later of Fort Wellington (56). In the first quarter of the 19th century, Torres Strait saw mainly westward traffic, to India. In the clipper age, trade followed the Great Circle Route (57) and the strategic importance of the Strait decreased. Fort Wellington was abandoned about 1840.

Not until the coming of steam did the bases again become vital, for coaling and refitting of both trading vessels and, even more importantly, of ships of the Royal Navy guarding the sea lanes and approaches to vital areas of the continent. 'When sails were abandoned dependence on good bases became absolute' (58). The bases were protected by forts which facilitated the operation of the Royal Navy, and consequently constituted an important element in Australia's defence. The base at Somerset Island, later transferred to Thursday Island, protected the approach to the east coast, while Albany (King

\* Vide Appendix L for details.



George Sound) in Western Australia guarded the approaches to the southern parts of the continent.

The erection of the federal forts must be viewed in the light of a truly co-operative venture in defending Australia in conjunction with Great Britain. The first fort to be established was Somerset, opposite Albany Island on York Peninsula, about 10 miles south east from the Cape, which was selected by Sir George Bowen, Governor of Queensland, in 1862, and was officially opened in 1864 (59). Great Britain contributed £7,000 and Queensland £5,000. South Australia declined to participate in the maintenance of Somerset because little, if any, of her trade came via Torres Strait. In 1877 the station was transferred to Port Kennedy on Thursday Island\* (60), principally because heavy riptides in Albany passage tended to make anchoring fairly dangerous. Port Kennedy had a safe harbour.

The defence potential of Thursday Island was first emphasised by Sir William Jervois (62) and later by Rear-Admiral Sir G. Tryon. Then, in 1887, the Colonial Conference suggested the principle of joint British/Australian responsibility for all bases of this kind. The principle was subsequently confirmed by Lord Knutsford in 1889 and 1890 (63). The colonies were responsible for all civil engineering tasks on Thursday Island, while Great Britain undertook to provide

\* Torres Strait islands had been annexed to Queensland in 1872, after the respective territorial jurisdictions of New South Wales and Queensland had been established. The New South Wales sphere of influence extended from the east coast of the continent to 154° M, and from 40° latitude, north to Torres Strait. Queensland's 'licence to occupy' extended east from 138° M, to include all islands in the Strait, Gulf of Carpentaria and in the Pacific to 154° M, and north of an east-west line through Port Danger (61).

the armament and a marine garrison. The South Australian contribution to the capital cost was estimated to be of the order of £1,460, and its share for garrison maintenance, about £140 per annum (64).

Acceptance of the proposals was not unanimous. All the colonies insisted that the garrison should consist of Australian troops and that, since all federal forts were primarily established to support the Royal Navy, Britain should take a greater share of the costs (65). Critics of the proposed armament, considered it too light and referred to it as 'sweepings from Woolwich Arsenal' (66). But while Britain conceded the point regarding the garrison, she did not think that heavier armament was warranted. Nor was Lord Knutsford prepared to accept the technical judgement of colonial officers. Besides, a reduction in foreign naval strength and the almost corresponding increase in British naval power in the Pacific rendered heavier armament superfluous (67) (68). Eventually the armaments envisaged in the original proposals were installed.

While negotiations regarding Thursday Island proceeded, South Australians sought means of making the Northern Territory pay. The efforts were understandable. South Australia had little interest in Thursday Island, either from a defence or a commercial point of view. On the other hand, the Colony had considerable vested interest in Darwin.

The press fired the first shot in the Darwin-for-Empire campaign, in 1885, by supporting a submission to the chief secretary in which Darwin's defence potential was brought officially to the notice of the government (69). In 1886 there was a serious suggestion to turn Darwin into an Imperial

arsenal '... and to establish defences and fortifications in the interests of the British Empire in the Pacific Ocean' (70). After the Colonial Conference of 1887 had considered Thursday Island and King George Sound, the South Australian Government submitted a very detailed, well documented proposition to the Colonial Office, seeking that Darwin should be declared an Imperial station (71). The submission, prepared by Captain J.P. MacLean of H.M.S. Flying Fish, argued that Darwin was closer to Colombo than King George Sound, and that as the terminal of the telegraph and of the proposed trans-continental railway, it would have to be defended, anyway in case of war, by at least two corvettes, or by batteries with corresponding fire power, while its port facilities appeared to be better than those of any other northern locality. Nevertheless, the South Australian submission was rejected. Admiral Tryon felt that Darwin's potential was of the future, whereas Thursday Island was an immediate necessity. In addition, he considered that Darwin lay too far south, and could be easily by-passed. Besides, the climate was bad. As for the telegraph line, in Tryon's opinion the fact that Darwin was the terminal carried little weight, because '... the cable could be interrupted almost anywhere along its long length' (72). The Colonial Office admitted that, once the rail and port facilities were completed, Darwin would be very important, from a colonial point of view, and should therefore be fortified by the Colony, but it had no strategic importance because 'the interests at Darwin were no more imperial than at Sydney or at Melbourne ' (73).

South Australia did not give up easily. Between 1889 and 1892 a number of attempts were made to further the Darwin-for-Empire case. The ensuing debates disclosed

inter-colonial jealousy and the crafty suggestion that the fortification of Darwin might offer a convenient means of disposing of the guns purchased prematurely for a proposed fort at Glenelg (74). South Australian parliamentarians were understandably annoyed at the military commandants' choice of Thursday Island in preference to Darwin. They went so far as to invoke the ever-present anti-federal sentiment: 'The spirit of Federation appears to have been carried so far that South Australia must sacrifice its interests to those of every other colony' (75). By 1891, the Darwin-for-Empire debate had been reduced to a contest between South Australia and the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Baron de Worms (76). To keep the argument going, J. Langdon Parsons, the South Australian champion of Darwin, resorted to attempts at discrediting the South Australian commandant, Major General Downes, by demanding that Downes be censured for not supporting the government on this issue (77). As for Major-General Tulloch, he was, in Langdon-Parsons' opinion '... the premature post-prandial orator at the Thursday Island banquet ... who by his absurd naming of Thursday Island the Singapore of Australia is against the defence of Port Darwin' (78).

The last words on Darwin were spoken in 1892 by the Chief-Secretary, Dr. Cockburn - unless Darwin was acceptable as a federal fort, South Australia would withhold financial support for Thursday Island (79). The point was put to the other colonies. Queensland supported South Australia. New South Wales agreed, on the proviso that a second telegraph station was not to be built at Darwin. Western Australia also agreed, but at the same time complained that she herself had to find additional moneys for Albany. Victoria hesitated,

stressing the dubiousness of the whole scheme, because not enough Europeans lived in the area to sustain the base. Eventually, Admiral Tryon placated the South Australians by promising to station a warship at Darwin, in case of emergency (80).

Although South Australia's victory was a pyrrhic one, the Colony offered to pay her contribution towards the maintenance of Thursday Island, which amounted to some £200-£300 each quarter. The offer proved more ready than the payments, of which only two can be ascertained between 1892 and 1896 (81). Thereafter, even the federation and Empire defence-minded Kingston exhibited an uncharacteristic parochialism and petty-mindedness. Colonel Gordon, the South Australian Commandant, displayed a similar attitude, advocating what amounted to federal blackmail: unless Darwin was reconsidered as an Imperial station, South Australia should dissociate herself from any federal defence arrangements (82). No doubt South Australians wished to recoup some of the financial losses sustained in the Northern Territory, or they may have genuinely attempted to open up the North, although no evidence has come to light to support this view, but one rather gains the impression that South Australia had manoeuvred herself into a position where the whole argument concerning Darwin had become a political obsession, from which the Colony could not very well retreat without losing face.

The Colony's attitude towards King George Sound was quite different. South Australians had long been aware of its strategic potential, which was first recognised by sending Major Edmund Lockyer from Sydney in 1826 to occupy the area commanding Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound (83).

Here the anchorage presented an open invitation to an enemy to disrupt maritime communications with England simply by denying British ships the necessary coaling facilities (84). The possibility of Australian involvement in hostilities with Russia made South Australians appreciate the colonial importance of Albany. 'The most important port for South Australian commerce is King George Sound', said the Observer in 1880 (85). At the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1881, the South Australian delegate, Sir William Morgan, moved that England be asked for an increase in the naval strength in Australian waters and for the fortification of King George Sound, to which the colonies would contribute half the cost. This was an impressive gesture, from a South Australian, but then Morgan's horizon may have been wider than his contemporaries' (86). Rear Admiral Tryon re-affirmed the importance of the station in 1885 (87). Then in 1886 a tentative agreement was reached in the Federal Council between Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia, with New South Wales and, now that payment loomed, South Australia hesitating (88). When Great Britain undertook to supply armament (89), South Australia consented to support the arrangement, provided she could supply the permanent artillery force (90).

Soon advertisements appeared in the South Australian press asking for recruits (91). A South Australian officer, Captain Hawker, was recommended for appointment as the Australian Officer Commanding a Federal Regiment, on temporary secondment from the South Australian military forces (92). The federal nature of the garrison caused problems, firstly because South Australia was not, at the time, represented in the Federal Council (93), and secondly, because the troops

were enlisted under South Australian legislation and therefore legal arrangements had to be made for their discharge and re-enlistment in Western Australia (94). Eventually, in 1894, the colonies ratified an agreement (95), whereby Western Australia was to contribute £5,000, while the remainder was to be raised jointly by the other colonies (except Tasmania and New Zealand) on a pro rata population basis. Victoria was to advance the funds and be reimbursed by the other colonies. In the case of disputes, the governor of Tasmania was to be the referee.

The South Australian garrison at King George Sound, which initially consisted of a warrant officer and twenty-six other ranks, enjoyed excellent service amenities, including a library of some 500 volumes (96), but the first federal inspecting officer found the standard of their proficiency, and more particularly their discipline, lamentably low. The warrant officer had to be reduced in rank for drunkenness, two men had to be discharged for insubordination and two men had deserted. Four others were discharged on medical grounds. Uniforms supplied by South Australia were considered untidy, unserviceable and of unsuitable material. All in all, the report on South Australia's contribution to Empire defence was scarcely flattering and evoked a (97) strongly worded protest from Adelaide.\*

Strangely enough, the records show no direct reference to England, which had contributed handsomely to the federal venture at King George Sound, and without whose co-operation, the fort (ostensibly designed for Empire defence, but in

\* A detailed but somewhat superficial description of the Albany forts can be found in an article by I. Bird (98).

reality of far greater importance to South Australia and Victoria) would never have come into being. Business conscious South Australians felt that it would be even better if a federal fort could be established, at England's expense, in the Colony itself. In 1898 they went so far as to offer Port Lincoln to the Admiralty, for a 'permanent settlement of an Imperial Naval and Training Station' (99).

It must be remembered, in fairness to South Australia, that while colonial parochialism and commercial self-interest no doubt prompted the Colony to urge Britain to commit funds for Empire defence purposes in South Australia, it would have been very difficult for the colonists to appreciate the real Empire defence potential of the Albany installation. After all, its value was not proved until 1914, when the base became the assembly area for troop convoys carrying the first A.I.F. to the other side of the world. Considering the Darwin episode and the Port Lincoln offer, both designed, on the face of it, for Empire defence, it would appear that there was a distinct difference between what England believed Australian ideas of Empire defence to be, and the colonial interpretation of these ideas. After 1887, England believed that the colonies wanted to make a contribution to the Empire. The Australian colonies saw co-operation in Empire defence as a means of augmenting their own local defence, at a cost of a few men and some otherwise useless real estate, or obtained by insignificant monetary contributions. Similar misunderstandings were to plague subsequent efforts to establish firm co-operation with England for the military and naval defence of the Empire.



CHAPTER VIIITOWARDS IMPERIAL CO-OPERATION

A great deal of the trouble was due to the refusal of the Australian statesmen to admit that membership of Empire involved duties and losses as well as privileges and gains.

H.L. Hall, 1934 (1)

The gravity of the situation does not affect Great Britain alone, but everyone of her dependencies. We at this remote part of the Queen's dominion are moved by the same hopes and fears and respond to the same appeals to patriotism as influence our fellow subjects in Great Britain.

Observer, 1885 (2)

To stand by and see our fellow-countryman slaughtered ... is a disgrace.

Letter to the Register,  
1881 (3)

The coolness with which the colonies evade the obligations which rest on all civilised nations is simply disgusting...

Lord Kimberly, 1895 (4)

## 8.1 South Australians in Empire Forces and Empire Wars

Military co-operation in Empire defence began for South Australia on a personal basis and in true Australian tradition it began with a sporting event, a rifle match, shot out by proxy in 1862 between two volunteer companies half a world apart. The South Australian team consisted of ten marksmen from Captain McFarlane's company at Milang, while their friendly opponents were English volunteers from Captain Mundella's company of the First Robinhoods (Nottingham). The English team won, as it did at the repeat performance in 1864 (5). At least, despite their different origins, a feeling of camaraderie existed between the two defence movements. This, however, did not imply eagerness to co-operate in Empire defence.

True, there were individuals who sought careers in the Empire forces. In 1868 A.H.F. Duncan, the thirteen year old son of a Port Adelaide doctor, applied for a cadetship in the Royal Navy (6). The first South Australian to qualify in the rather stringent entrance examination to the military college at Sandhurst was A.K. Moore, son of a Rundle Street doctor (7). A Mr. Bagot in 1865 gained fourth place out of 150 candidates examined for Woolwich (8). However, it should not be imagined that such cadetships were in great demand. The author has been able to trace records of only five applicants, one of whom was unsuccessful (9). In the early eighties graduates from 'chartered colonial universities' became eligible for entry into Sandhurst (10). A volunteer officer, Major G.L. Gretton, obtained a captaincy commission in the 3rd Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment (11). Gretton

wrote the first description of the South Australian defence system to be published overseas (12). By 1885 the scheme for colonial candidates in the British army was well organised. The age limit was 19-22 years, the candidates were required to have had at least two years experience in local military forces (13), and from 1896 the South Australian Government paid the travelling costs of officers who had obtained British commissions.

No South Australian had any thought of serving in the Crimean war, nor was much Imperial interest shown in the Maori wars. Indeed, the second Maori war in 1864 aroused some hostility in the Colony. The press strongly objected to attempts by the New Zealand government to obtain recruits from South Australia by enticing them to become military settlers, who after first serving in the campaign would have been entitled to land allotments on the North Island ranging from 400 acres for a field officer to 50 acres for private soldiers. South Australians argued that the war was no concern of theirs, and that New Zealand had no right to steal settlers brought to South Australia at considerable expense (14).

On the other hand, South Australians were usually quite willing to contribute materially to Empire defence activities, especially if the gesture was not to be too expensive, or, better still, promised commercial advantages. After the Indian mutiny, there was a constant demand for horses in India, and whenever remount officers came to Australia on purchasing missions the South Australian Government went out of its way to facilitate their work and was even prepared to make police mounts available (15). Similarly, the Colony was eager to maintain coaling stocks, provided that all charges for bringing the coal to South Australia, and for storing it in quantities of 2,000-2,500 tons, at Port Adelaide were fully met by the Royal Navy (16).

Nevertheless, by the seventies South Australians began to demonstrate some willingness to serve in Empire wars. During the Ashanti war two citizens, C.Y. Gold, late 65th Regiment of Foot, and J. Clark, a custom's agent, offered their services, but 'Mr Secretary Cardwell ... [had] no opportunity of employing these gentlemen on his expedition' (17). It was during the Zulu war in 1878/79 that South Australia first offered the Crown direct military assistance. The offer was made by <sup>Colonel</sup> M.F. Downes, the military commandant, through the Governor, Sir William Jervois, (probably in the hope that submission would carry more weight if conveyed to the government in this manner) and received the assent of Sir William Morgan, the Premier. The offer was, however, 'declined with thanks', although a special message of appreciation was received from the Queen (18). The Ashanti war also saw the first South Australian casualty of an Imperial war, a Lieutenant Edgar Oliphant Anstey, who was commissioned in the 1/24th Regiment of Foot and was killed at Ishwandula on 22.1.1879, where his regiment was practically wiped out.\*

(1881)

When news of the defeat at Majuba Hill/reached Adelaide, within hours a number of men volunteered to 'help our chaps' (20). Thus the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Samuel Way, was able to advise London, in February 1881, that some 200 'well trained' volunteers would be available and suggested that Sir William Jervois, at the time in London, should press for acceptance of the offer (21).

\* British casualties at Ishwandula were 53 officers and about 1,400 men, a very high rate compared with the six officers and 327 other ranks killed at Alma. The loss in commission money at Ishwandula was £13,500 (19).

Once again, the offer was declined with thanks, again accompanied by expressions of gratitude (22), but not before conveying to the House of Commons the impression that South Australians were conscious of Empire defence. In fact, a debate in the House later that year provoked extensive enquiries regarding the true extent of South Australian Empire consciousness (21).

Majuba Hill created considerable public enthusiasm. There was even a suggestion for the formation of an Australian brigade (23) which D.C.F. Moodie, who considered himself an expert on Africa,\* offered to organise and lead (24). Not that the idea of sending troops to Africa met with universal approval. The Register in particular, often the mouth-piece of the radical sector of the community, claimed that the act of volunteering established once and for all the existence of Imperial, as well as local, patriotism and '... a loyalty to the Throne demonstrated more forcibly than [by] 1,000 after-dinner speeches ...'. Yet, impressed upon its readers that volunteers would have to serve under British officers whom they had never seen before, undergo discomforts, and all the thanks the War Office would give might be in the form '... of a few crosses'. The paper then proceeded to reveal its anti-Imperial attitude, pointing out that the Boers had gone to the Transvaal to escape British rule, that they were farmers, just like most of the South Australians, who were closely connected by ties of kinship with the Cape population, and 'what sort of welcome is the Australian colonist likely to get from a fellow colonist

\* Donald Campbell Francis Moodie came to South Australia in 1869 from South Africa, where for about twenty years he had assisted his father, an ex-Royal Navy Officer, in various administrative capacities.

when he comes to support Imperial interests to which the locals are hostile? (25).

However, the Register spoke only for a minority in the Colony. Of all the letters published at that time, there was only one (26) which supported the newspaper's anti-Imperial attitude, all others stood solidly behind the Imperial cause. The Observer seemed to treat South Australia's offer of assistance as an investment, which some day might pay dividends.

It is satisfactory to know that the patriotic act of the volunteers of this colony had met with such recognition in high quarters in Great Britain. This will be remembered long after the Transvaal war has finished (27).

When the news of General Gordon's death became known in South Australia, on 11th February, 1885, the government did not rush into action on the same day, as New South Wales had done, but waited until the 16th, and then offered 250 infantry with their own officers. At the same time, South Australia suggested to the other colonies the formation of an Australian contingent. Victoria agreed at once to co-operate, but New South Wales, having made its own arrangements, declined the invitation, while Queensland and Tasmania hesitated to commit themselves. South Australia then advised the Colonial Office that the formation of an Australian contingent was being considered, an offer which Britain declined for the time being. By mid-March, however, South Australians were beginning to dissociate themselves from the Soudan war. It was suggested, somewhat lamely, that the Colony should wait until parliament met in May (28), and that an Imperial act might be required to remove the legal difficulties of employing troops outside territorial limits (29)(although these difficulties had not prevented New South Wales from sending an expeditionary force (30)). For South Australia, the situation was beginning to lose its

urgency while complications elsewhere suggested that all available troops might be required in Australia. The point was well taken by Sir Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, in a marginal note on the South Australian despatch: 'Mr Bramston, they are thinking of the Russian fleet, not for the first time' (31). South Australia's official attitude was fully supported by the press. If the Viceroy of India was ordered to prepare for possible hostilities with Russia, then surely such an action would be incumbent on the Australian colonies. If troops had been required for an immediate advance on Khartoum, as was first believed to be the case, then immediate action would have been justified. But the press saw no reason for South Australian men, who were 'a body of superior intelligence and physique to the average British soldier' to act in the Soudan as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water to the British Regiments' (32). In the end, the only tangible contribution South Australia made towards the Soudan campaign was a gift parcel of fruit to the New South Wales contingent, on board the S.S. Iberia en route to Egypt (33).

Nevertheless, the Sudan crisis did demonstrate a growing Empire consciousness in the Colony for, despite pre-occupation with local mobilisation against a possible Russian attack on her own shores, the activities of Australian troops in Egypt were closely followed and the British commanders' assessment of their performance proudly reported. For instance, the London Observer was quoted as having commented that the speed with which the force had been dispatched '... put to shame the best performances of Woolwich and Aldershot' (34). Most importantly, although the Colony was not prepared to

spare 700-800 men for service in the Soudan, she was ready to 'take part in the perils as well as the privileges of [her] position as an integral part of the British Empire' (35), and while not too much historical significance should be attached to reunions of Imperial soldiers, including veterans from the Crimean war (36), the prominence given to such occasions was nevertheless symptomatic of the feeling of the day.

It is the idea of the unity of the Empire. For a time Britains will be in Britain as one, and greater Britains all over the world will have a special realisation of the privileges and glory of their nationhood (37).

The growing identification with Empire culminated in the enthusiasm displayed on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, in 1897. Not only did South Australia hasten to authorise a contingent (38), she also prodded a reluctant sister colony, Western Australia, to do likewise (39). The South Australian contingent, of mounted troops, consisted of two officers, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Rowell and Captain L.H.D. Wilson, one sergeant major, one sergeant, one bugler and twenty rank and file. The troops formed part of what the Observer called 'the first march of the Federal army'. As the only mounted troops in the Australian contingent, they earned South Australia the nickname of 'the 25 horse colony' (40).

The Jubilee was an opportunity for behind-the-scenes discussions aimed at bringing about greater military Empire co-operation, and organised mainly by the Colonial Defence Committee, whose role was fast becoming that of an Empire-wide defence planning institution. The era of comparatively effortless British world supremacy was drawing to a close. The Australian contingent, together with other colonial and Imperial units, had marched down the Mall amid the panoply of Imperial pomp



and splendour, indicating that it should be possible, if not indeed imperative, to formalise the co-operation now implicit in the presence of the colonial forces in London.

One of the Committee's first schemes involved the raising of Imperial units in the colonies and then exchanging them, on a rotational basis, with British and other colonial contingents. The idea, first mooted about 1883 by Colonel I.J.C. Herbert, commanding the Canadian militia (41), was publicly advocated by one H.E. Howell of Manchester, who suggested that regular Imperial units should be raised in the colonies, and called, perhaps, the Royal Australian Regiment (92). In June 1897, the Colonial Defence Committee passed the idea on to the colonial premiers (43) who agreed that the recommendation had some merit (44), but when the issue came to be debated in South Australia, C.C. Kingston objected that the very idea smacked of Imperial Federation (45). In the end, only New South Wales and Queensland agreed, the latter restricting her proposed contribution to a few selected artillery officers (46).

In addition to political disagreement, the scheme faced almost insurmountable practical difficulties. Since military laws varied widely, it appeared impossible to send soldiers, enlisted under these laws, anywhere abroad, thus restricting any exchange to regular units, themselves far too small to constitute effective fighting forces. There was another difficulty, raised by the Canadians, but equally applicable to the Australian scene. Regular officers and N.C.O.s were to a large extent occupied with the training and administration of the colonial militia and/or volunteer forces. Would British officers on exchange be prepared to carry out these same duties? Predictably, '... they [the British officers]

all with one accord began to make excuses' (47).

Realising that the exchange idea had little hope of becoming reality, the Colonial Defence Committee suggested raising British Army units in Australia (48), but there is no evidence that this alternative scheme was ever formally submitted to the colonial premiers, for even the most Empire conscious colonists would have resented the formation, on their soil, of a force which would not have been subject to their own laws, would have been obliged to serve under conditions quite different to their own and would not have been available to them in time of need.

The shortcomings of both the foregoing schemes, may have prompted the South Australian commandant, Colonel J.M. Gordon, then Australian Inspector of Warlike Stores in London, to submit to the War Office in 1899 a scheme, which became the blueprint for subsequent Australian overseas contingents, both to the Boer and to the two World Wars. It was called Detail of Scheme to Raise Units of Imperial Troops in Australia (49). It was a compromise between Howell's proposal for raising regular regiments in the colonies and the suggested exchange of troops. As a blue print for action in case of emergency, the scheme provided the organisational details which were to enable a homogeneous Australian force to be raised, for Imperial purposes, at relatively short notice, and outside the framework of existing colonial defence machinery. Initially the Imperial contingent was to be a composite force, raised throughout the colonies, consisting of 8 rifle companies, each of 116 all ranks and one mounted rifle company of 131 all ranks. In addition, an ammunition column was to be raised in Queensland and a field hospital corps was to be formed in South Australia.

Gordon had submitted his proposal without the knowledge of the South Australian Government, but any discussion was forestalled by the outbreak of the Boer war. Thus, none of the early schemes for military co-operation came to fruition. Essentially the colonies were not prepared to commit themselves militarily, unless they could see that such an effort would contribute substantially, either to their own local safety, or to the safety of the Empire in the vicinity of their continent. The history<sup>of</sup>/colonial participation in Empire naval defence told a similar story.

South Australia, together with the other colonies, had always considered naval defence to be distinct from the protection of shore and port facilities. As the first line of defence, it was Britain's responsibility. It was argued that the financial stake which the navy was supposed to protect was largely British owned: in 1865, four out of every five ships coming to Australia were British, Britain owned about 83 per cent of their total worth, and 97 per cent of the cargo was insured in England (50). Even Englishmen agreed. 'If our colonies were to leave us tomorrow we still must have men-of-war to protect our commerce', were the words of W.F. Forster, the first president of the Imperial Federation League (51).

While the South Australian press (52), and prominent South Australians like Sir John Downer (53), stressed that responsibility for the first line of defence rested with the Royal Navy, Britain's official attitude differed. The Mills' resolution of 1862 endeavoured to throw the onus of defence on to the colonies by providing a basis for the withdrawal of Imperial troops, and by trying to apply the same principle to naval defence. When it was suggested, in 1877, that the principle of common contribution should be put into practice, the Register objected that there could be no taxation without representation (54), and that the colonies could not be expected to bear any fixed proportion of costs' ... except in so far as it conduces to their own defence' (55), stressing once again that there could be no co-operation in Empire defence unless it had a direct bearing on the defence of the Colony.

The principle of common contribution meant that, capital cost, and maintenance expenditure and amortisation

were to be shared on some predetermined basis between Great Britain and the Australian colonies. Great Britain believed, as in the case of the federal forts that the Australian colonies desired to contribute to Empire defence. Hence the outcry of the South Australian press, which saw the contribution in the light of an Empire defence tax or, more succinctly, as a levy. This was something that could not be imposed without political representation. The Australian colonies, on the other hand, were prepared to subsidise on their own volition an increase in the British naval strength in Australian waters as a means of their own protection. In South Australia, the question of contributing to an increased naval force arose when the proceedings of the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1870 were debated in the South Australian Legislative Council. While New South Wales and Victoria wanted such a force, in lieu of the withdrawn Imperial troops, South Australia objected because the force would have been of little economic value to the colony.

The effect of a naval squadron stationed in the colonies would cause a considerable amount of money to be circulated in Sydney and Melbourne ... but so far as this Colony was concerned, the visits of the squadron would be like angels' visits, few and far in between. (56)

Then at the Inter-Colonial Conference in Sydney, in January 1881, South Australia made history by being the only colony to suggest that half the cost of the increase in naval strength should be borne by the colonies themselves (57), a point which was not lost on Great Britain (58). The proposition may have seemed out of character, but this was the premiership of Sir William Morgan who had shown, in the case of the federal forts, that he understood the principles of

defence co-operation with Empire.\* Morgan resigned in mid-1881, and the South Australian Government reverted to its former attitude of disinterest unless there was something to be gained. Hence the total silence in parliament and in the press when the report of the 1882 Carnarvon Commission was made public.

The report emphasised that, while the establishment of a colonial naval force would be impracticable, for a variety of reasons, the colonies might 'not unreasonably be called upon to assist in some degree in the naval defence of the Empire' (60). The Carnarvon Commission stipulated that assistance of this nature should not be dependent on colonial restriction of the vessels' movements, nor would it give the colonies a voice in their deployment. The Commission fondly hoped 'that the spirit of loyalty and the growing prosperity of the colonies would lead them to accept the contribution principle' (61). Australians were consulted, superficially. Sir Henry Parkes did not think the time to be ripe for such an agreement, New South Wales and Victoria supported the idea of unconditional contribution, but Sir Arthur Blythe of South Australia - at the time the South Australian Agent-General - did not believe his fellow colonists would waive the principle of 'no taxation without representation', or give up their say in a declaration of war (62).

When the Australia Station was raised to flag rank, in 1884, the commander designate, Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon, was instructed to discuss with the Australian colonies

\* Vide Section 7.2.D.C. Gordon suggests, incorrectly, that the South Australian attitude was influenced by Sir William Jervois (59), forgetting that interference of this nature would have been tantamount to taking sides in what was, after all, a purely colonial and inter-Colonial matter - an unforgiveable sin for a governor.

an Admiralty scheme, based on the principle of extending the Royal Navy, rather than creating individual colonial navies

(63). The proposed suggestions were as follows :

- (a) That the purely local Naval Defence Force, which had already been created in several Colonies, should remain substantially on the footing on which it was already established.
- (b) That any sea-going vessels that might be provided, equipped and maintained at the cost of the Colonies, should be manned by the Admiralty, and be placed in every respect on the same footing as were Her Majesty's vessels then belonging to the station, including a periodical change of officers and men.
- (c) That the vessels be provided at the cost of the Colonies, and should be retained within the limits of the Australian seas.
- (d) That no reduction of the forces then on the station should take place consequent on the addition of any force made at the cost of the Colonies.
- (e) That the entire cost of any additional vessels should be borne by the Colonies.
- (f) That an increased number of naval cadetships should be given to the Colonies.
- (g) That during time of peace these vessels should be employed in the same way as other vessels of war on the station.
- (h) That any arrangement made should be for a period of ten years.
- (i) That the several Colonies should still continue to arrange for local defence, and that any sea-going vessels of war added to the squadron on the station should not be subject to any divided responsibility as to their movements within Australian waters, but should form part of the squadron and be entirely under the control of the Admiral Commanding-in-Chief.
- (j) That the additional ships to be provided should be five cruisers, of the Archer class, and two fast sea-going torpedo vessels.

A conference was convened on the H.M.S. Nelson between the admiral and the Australian premiers, in April, 1886, but only Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria attended (64), and Queensland stated that the ships should be provided by

by Britain, with the colonies paying the annual maintenance and depreciation costs on a pro-rata population basis (65). This was a departure from Queensland's 1885 stand, which envisaged the building costs being borne by the colonies (66). New South Wales at first adhered to the principle of unconditional subsidy (67), but subsequently fell into line with Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania: the capital cost was to be borne by Britain, and the colonies were to pay maintenance and depreciation costs at a rate of 5 per cent per annum (68). The latter was to be in the form of a sinking fund, provided that the interest and sinking fund payments combined did not exceed the principal (69), implying that the ships were expected to remain on the station for 20 years. South Australia concurred (70). In other words, none of the colonies were now willing to concede colonial liability for the capital cost of extending the Royal Navy. England was to pay for additional vessels, even if they were to be built not because England required them but on the insistence of the colonies. Admiral Tryon pointed out to the Australian premiers that earlier, when the colonies had provisionally accepted capital cost liability, ... 'not a word was said as to the unfairness of the proposal. On the contrary ... it met with a general acquiescence in principle' (71). However, he was unable to change their attitude and the colonial stand prevailed. At the Colonial Conference in 1887 the Australian Naval Agreement was concluded. England supplied three cruisers and one torpedo boat for active service, and two cruisers and one torpedo boat as a reserve fleet, mothballed in Australian ports. This fleet was in addition to the Imperial naval strength in Australian waters and could not be moved without Australian consent. In return, the Australian colonies contracted to pay £126,000 per



annum, including running costs of £31,000, and annual amortization of £35,000 on the capital costs (72).

The provisions of the agreement aroused heated debates in the other colonies, but not in South Australia. Perhaps the latter lacked the vocal Irish minority with its traditional anti-Imperialistic attitude, so apparent in some of the eastern colonies, while the silence of the press may have been due to the lack of public relations value in the issue. It did not affect the colonists personally.

Ratification of the agreement by the various parliaments met with considerable opposition, both in the colonies, with the exception of Victoria (73), and in England. As one colonial critic put it, while a hundred years ago Britain had taxed the colonies directly, now she was asking the colonies to tax themselves, both methods with the same end effect, namely, taxation without representation (74). Meanwhile in England, W.H. Smith, 'the Ruler of the Queen's Navee', was saying: 'We have in this agreement recognised the principle of a common duty by the people of this country and our cousins ... in the Colonies in connection with the protection and defence of the Empire' (75), the opposite view was expressed by Henry Labouchere: the agreement would only lead to 'sponging on Britain by the other colonies' (76). As for the South Australian politicians, some, like Gilbert, Burgoyne, Lander, saw the agreement as a means of reducing existing expenditure - it was suggested that the Protector should be sold. Homburg saw no necessity for the auxiliary fleet - Germany would prevent Russia from attacking Australia. Kingston, in the second reading pointed to the measure as the first step towards the formation of an Australian fleet (77).

Downer, who had been attacked for committing South Australia to the agreement before obtaining parliamentary approval, explained the background to the bill designed to strengthen Australian and Empire defence. He was immediately attacked by Holder on the grounds that the whole measure merely tended to bring the colonies closer together. 'We were ... justified in considering self first and Australia second ...' and obviously, the Empire last. One member, Glynn, objected to the bill on the grounds that it would put South Australia's neutrality in jeopardy in times of war (78). In all, there were six members, Gilbert, Burgoyne, Rees, Holder, Homburg, Glynn and Caldwell, who objected to the bill, a minority, but a significant one.

Generally, the colonies saw the naval agreement of 1887 firstly, and primarily, as a means of obtaining their own defence on more favourable terms than hitherto, a point stressed quite forcibly when the renewal of the agreement was discussed in 1897 (78a). Secondly, the Auxiliary Squadron was not considered as an addition to the existing naval strength, but rather as a means of replacing the obsolete naval force then on the station with more efficient vessels of the Archer Class (79). Thirdly, naval defence of Australia was regarded as England's problem, mainly because 'if commercial marine service stopped for even a brief period [it would be] of a greater matter to England than to us' (80). This was doubtless an oversimplification. The bombardment of Sydney might be worrying to London, but would be disastrous to Australian morale. And there was always the possibility that, while the Royal Navy was in the process of establishing its supremacy, raiders might still harass Australian shores.

South Australia expressed little interest in implementing the agreement and making it work. Because South Australians had a greater interest in King George Sound, they wanted the squadron to rendezvous there, rather than at Thursday Island (81). It was also hoped that the fleet might visit Adelaide from time to time, and might even take over the Protector, thereby saving the colony money (82). The fleet did put in an appearance, in October 1891, but the government did not grant a public holiday, and was only prepared to issue railway excursion tickets (83).

Victoria, on the other hand, showed her approval of the agreement by the eagerness with which the colony interested herself in the affairs of the squadron. Victoria became the Squadron's business manager (84), and also undertook to safeguard colonial interests. When the Admiralty proposed to exchange the armoured H.M.S. Orlando, with its 9.2-inch and 6-inch guns, for the faster but unarmoured H.M.S. Astrea, Victoria objected on the grounds that the exchange was a violation of Article V of the Auxiliary Fleet - Imperial Defence Act 1888, because it meant a reduction of overall naval strength (85).

Some undignified squabbling ensued over the assessment of contributions by individual colonies. The contributions first suggested by Victoria had to be amended because Queensland wanted to exclude the aborigines. New Zealand immediately refused to count the Maoris. Queensland withdrew her demand and the Australian colonies agreed to concede New Zealand's request and thereby accept an additional contribution of £1,164, of which the South Australian share was £108. Meanwhile South Australia sought to make her agreement conditional upon the exclusion of the Northern Territory, Darwin not being part of the federal defence scheme, and had to be

reminded by Victoria that only King George Sound and Thursday Island had been agreed upon 'to be of Federal Character' (86).

The table below, shows the first assessment with its corresponding contributions, and the adjustments which allowed for the population deletions eventually conceded to New Zealand.

State	Basic Population	Assessment Contribution	Adjusted Population	Assessment Contribution
Victoria	1,333,266	£37,343	1,333,266	£37,723
New South Wales	1,121,732	£36,963	1,121,732	£37,340
Queensland	387,960	£12,784	391,080	£13,018
South Australia	319,145	£10,516	319,145	£10,624
Western Australia	49,200	£1,621	49,200	£1,638
Tasmania	145,290	£4,788	145,290	£4,836
New Zealand	667,185	£21,985	625,508	£20,821
TOTALS	3,823,778	£126,000	3,785,221	£126,000

Only New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia forwarded their share in advance, as stipulated by the agreement (87).

The Colonial Office had to remind South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland of their obligations (88) and the first South Australian contribution was finally paid twelve months after it was due (89). Subsequent instalments were paid only after several reminders (90). The Colony, on the other hand insisted on an immediate response from the flag officer when she tendered to supply the squadron with tinned vegetables, meat and flour (91)

Arguments also arose over maintenance work and fleet visits, which in times of depression meant considerable financial benefits, particularly to the smaller colonies. South Australia demanded more repair work, because in 1891 and 1892

some 140 ship days were spent in South Australia. (The fleet used to send individual ship units to the various colonies). New South Wales demanded compensation for money spent on repair shop facilities, and Victoria supported South Australia because she felt that New South Wales, being the fleet station, gained more indirect benefits than the other colonies (92).

The Naval Agreement covered a period of ten years. During that time, the Auxiliary Squadron consisted of the cruisers, H.M.S. Katoomba, H.M.S. Ringarooma, H.M.S. Wallaroo, H.M.S. Mildura, and H.M.S. Tauranga, and two destroyers. Of these, three cruisers and one destroyer were always in commission, the other vessels being held in reserve, in Sydney Harbour. The overall annual expenditure varied between £116,000 in 1898/9 and £137,000 in 1894/5 (93). The total amount paid by the Australian colonies to the Admiralty was about £1,118,000, with an average of £124,000 per annum, somewhat less than originally anticipated.

With the passage of time dissatisfaction with the agreement grew. Considerable sums of money left the country, without any tangible benefit. Australian pride was hurt. Queenslanders spoke quite openly of naval mercenaries - 'there was nothing naval that could be called Australian or even Australasian' (94). Possibly the gravest objection was that the Auxiliary Squadron was not to be the nucleus of an Australian fleet, as had been confidently anticipated by an informal conference in 1887 between Sir Henry Parkes of New South Wales and the South Australian premier, T. Playford (95). It was not surprising that towards the end of the century there were suggestions for changes in the subsidy system. One such suggestion came from a South Australian, E.W. Cracknell,

who recommended that the modern, privately-owned steamships should be enrolled as auxiliary cruisers, their armament stored ashore and the ships to be worked by the naval reserve (96). A similar idea was expressed by Alfred Deakin a few years later (97), showing that not only had people not grasped the change in the concepts of naval warfare - Creswell thought the schemes had 'more than their due share of popular fallacy on naval strategy' (98) - but that the main defence effort was still believed to rest with shore defences rather than in the protection of the sea lanes of the Empire.

The most important suggestion came from the South Australian naval commandant, William Rooke Creswell. It was first submitted to the South Australian chief-secretary and subsequently discussed by the Australian premiers in London, in 1897, during negotiations for the renewal of the 1887 agreement. The South Australian representative, C.C. Kingston had opposed the continuation of the naval subsidy and put forward Creswell's suggestion as an alternative. Creswell recommended

that instead of money contribution the Australian colonies should furnish an equivalent in trained seamen for the Royal Naval Reserve for service in Australasian waters and contiguous seas. (99)

The Australian contribution of £126,000 should be used to raise 5,000 men, who were to be also available for service with the China, Pacific and East Indian Squadrons. Creswell suggested that an annual retaining fee of £12 should be paid to each of the 5,000 men of the reserve, using the remainder for the maintenance of gunnery schools, training establishments and the like.

From an Imperial point of view Creswell's scheme had the advantage of strengthening the Royal Naval Reserve. Besides, the Australian depot installations were a safe base

from which British squadrons East of Suez could be speedily reinforced. The Admiralty viewed the scheme with mixed feelings. It was attractive in that it would have prevented the formation of an independent Australian naval force. The Australian colonies could scarcely lay claim to any of the vessels once they ceased paying for their amortization. On the other hand, the Admiralty must have been dismayed at the prospect of the British taxpayer having to foot the entire bill for the maintenance of the Auxiliary Squadron, whose continued existence was a conditio sine qua non in Creswell's scheme.

Creswell's scheme was supplemented by an alternative suggestion, submitted in 1898 to Viscount Goschen, the First Sea Lord, by the Empire League, and based on information largely supplied by Creswell himself (100). The proposal envisaged that the colonies would continue to subsidise the Auxiliary Squadron, but that the Admiralty would pay the Naval Reserve retaining fees, provided that the colonies paid for training (101). Creswell realised the difficulties which would have arisen the moment Australians, with their higher standard of living, were obliged to serve with lower paid English members of the Reserve, and suggested that Australians should receive the difference in service pay as deferred pay on their return to the colonies. He also recommended that the Reserve should consist of three divisions, with service as follows: fleet service for six years, after which time a member could be transferred to the second division for service in the local naval forces, while remaining available to reinforce the first division to replace casualties. After a further six years, the reservists would be transferred to the third division, serving

in shore installations, manning sub-marine defences and remaining available to refill the ranks of the second division.

Both, Creswell's scheme and the alternative put forward by Goschen were ingenious compromises, between the Australian desire to purchase protection cheaply and the English assumption that the colonies wanted to contribute in some measure to Empire defence. Captain Robert Collins, the Victorian Secretary for Defence, voiced strong objections, both to the Creswell and to the Empire League schemes, in a memorandum written in October 1898 (102). He pointed out that it was impractical for the naval reserve to serve 28 days annually in addition to the six months fleet service stipulated by conditions of service for the Royal Naval Reserve. Nor were there any means of training the reserve; a request for drilling the Sydney Naval Brigade aboard an Auxiliary Squadron vessel had been refused. The scheme did nothing to further Australian naval aspirations, because the vessels were not identified with the colonies, other than naming them after colonial places. Collins also criticised the size of the monetary contribution as being too high as long as it included amortization on vessels no longer suited to Australian conditions. He advocated closer adherence to the provisions of the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865, which 'evidently contemplated the establishment of Colonial Navies with corps of Royal Naval Reserve and liability to serve with Her Majesty's regular forces' (103).

Lord Brassey, the Governor of Victoria, tried to effect a compromise between the Creswell-Empire League schemes and Collins' submission, in a memorandum, entitled Colonial Naval Reserve, which he forwarded to the premiers of Australia in February 1899 (104). He was not very explicit on the



question of how the scheme should be paid for, other than to say that 'the former [England] should provide the ships, [and] the whole or a large proportion of the men'. Brassey's deus ex machina solution to the problem of Naval reserve training was to suggest that 'the Colonial Naval Reserve should consist wholly or in part of marine artillery', thus allowing a major part of the training to be done ashore.

In August 1899 a conference of naval commandants was convened in Melbourne to resolve the problem of the naval reserve once and for all (105). The conference rejected Admiralty training conditions, recommending, instead, that the Naval Reserve should be raised by expanding existing local naval brigades and training them on reserve ships dispersed in peace time to the various ports. The conference also recommended that the total Australian naval expenditure, at that time amounting to £191,000 per annum, should be used to finance the loan of five second-class destroyers, pay for their maintenance, and also for the training of the reserve, which would be available for service with the Royal Navy. The solution was to be men, instead of specie, the loan of modern second-class cruisers, instead of the hire-purchase of rapidly ageing third-rate ships.

The Admiralty remained silent. The Times, as quoted in the South Australian press, disdainfully dismissed the scheme: 'a non-descript force of inadequately trained volunteers would be illusory ... and a separate colonial fleet officered and manned by amateurs would be expensive in peace and absolutely ineffective in war' (106).

The Times' derogatory comments were not put to the test; the 1903 Naval Agreement, apparently, effectively ended

Australian naval aspirations. Because reliance on purely military defence was unacceptable, and since the creation of an Australian fleet was too expensive, the existing arrangement was renewed, on terms even less advantageous to Australia than agreed upon in 1887. It was now to cost the Australians £200,000 per annum, an increase of 60 per cent, and, more importantly, the Australian government lost control over the movement of the subsidised vessels in time of war.

Colonial co-operation, generally, with Great Britain in the naval and military defence of the Empire had run a tortuous course. With respect to the former, tangible results had been achieved. The colonies had gained increased local naval protection, while the Empire, at comparatively little cost, acquired a strategic naval capability which did not interfere with new ideas of fleet concentration in European waters. But little, if anything, had been achieved in the military sense. Legal and practical difficulties rendered the co-ordination and/or integration of colonial and Empire forces well nigh impossible. Yet when the occasion demanded it, the colonies were able to mount a not inconsiderable effort for the military defence of the Empire.

South Australian co-operation with Britain in the defence of the Empire was tardy and only towards the end of the century assumed the appearance of a more realistic partnership in Imperial defence. Although some individuals made Empire defence their career and although the Colony in 1885 made a gesture of coming to the aid of the mother country, South Australia's formal contribution to Empire defence consisted of a somewhat reluctant participation in naval defence, a small contingent to the Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and some very practical suggestions for colonial participations in the military defence

of the Empire. The basis for these suggestions was a well developed military capability at home.

## CHAPTER IX

THE TEST - PREPARATION FOR LOCAL DEFENCE

Though the Commandant understands the manifold difficulties experienced by the volunteer officers in completing returns, it is hoped they will make every effort to render them as punctually as possible ... .

Standing Orders, S.A. Militia  
Reserve Forces, 1891. (1)

We everywhere meet with a handful of volunteers, dressed in a variety of costumes and mustering as many officers as privates.

Observer, 1860. (2)

The Government always recognised proposed Fort [at Glenelg] useless for threatened war, also information [on] details [for] mounting [of] guns... unnecessary before proceeding to construction.

Chief-Secretary of South Australia,  
1885 (3)

The battalion fell in and marched to Montefiore Hill to the measured music of the military band under Lieutenant Oughton making altogether a very pretty spectacle.

Observer, 1880. (4)

This terminated the review. Soldiers again subsided into civilians, music, the banners, all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war disappeared and the cows and horses which had wildly fled before the invading footsteps once more regained possession of their quiet pastures. Sic transit gloria mundi.

Observer, 1861. (5)

## 9.1 Military Administration in South Australia, 1854-1901

The degree of preparedness for the defence of South Australia can only be gauged theoretically; on no occasion did the military forces of the Colony have to face the acid test of actual hostilities. The extent and quality of the Colony's military efforts may, however, be judged from the mass of records referring to her preparations for meeting anticipated threats.

Let us first consider the question of military administration, a question vital to the effectiveness of all other aspects of defence. The Colony lacked a tradition of military administration; she could not draw on the experience of a Wellington or his staff officers. On the other hand, South Australia was not hamstrung by the cumbersome procedures which had developed in England, where, during the 19th century, operational command was exercised by the Crown, through the Horse Guards, while all matters affecting pay and supply were in the hands of parliament. There was no divided control in South Australia: the Crown, in the person of the governor, was the nominal commander-in-chief, at least until 1895. Actual command was exercised by the ministry of the day, through the chief-secretary. The military and naval commandants were in fact public servants who, apart from their normal military responsibilities of command, training and the like, had the delegation to spend the funds allocated by parliament for defence purposes.

South Australian military administrators had a different problem to contend with. While the English forces of the Crown consisted of full-time professionals, the colonial forces, including that of South Australia, were enlisted on a

part-time basis. Hand-in-hand with the administration and training of part-time soldiers went the difficulty of exercising military authority over men who, by virtue of their social background, resented any form of authority. These difficulties necessitated frequent organisational changes and changes in the order of battle,\* with the result that a new organisation was rarely given enough time to settle down, a phenomenon not unknown to the modern Australian army.

The administration of the first volunteers, enlisted during the Crimean war, was somewhat haphazard. Staff appointments (6) seemed to rest in the hands of the chief-secretary who issued all instructions for enlistment and training (7). The chief-secretary determined the uniforms (8), issued regulations concerning the appointment of officers (9) and the scales for pay and forage (10), and concerned himself with a host of other detail.

After 1859 military administration passed into the hands of the military staff office, with clearly defined lines of responsibility, particularly for the accounting of weapon issues and ammunition expenditure (11). No elaborate staff organisation existed for the administration of the forty-odd rifle companies raised at that time: a lone staff officer was assisted by a clerk, who was joined in 1861 by a messenger boy (12).

Colonel Blyth, the Imperial officer overseeing the colonial forces in the early sixties, recognised that the administrative organisation was inadequate to cope with

\* The term order of battle means the disposition of units and subunits within the framework of a given military organisation.

ordinary, day to day, commissariat activities, such as ex gratia payments (13), normal military administrative arrangements, such as weapon issues and dress instructions (14) and, finally, with the organisation of catering facilities (15). Control by the chief-secretary's department meant that military administration was merely a junior adjunct to the many other responsibilities of that office, and hence placed military activities very low on the list of priorities. Blyth's recommendation, that the military department should become a fixed government establishment, was rejected because '... conditions may arise which would make it advisable to put military matters on a different footing' (16).

The administrative organisation was placed on a sounder basis when Colonel M.F. Downes took command in South Australia, in October, 1877. He began to publish General Orders in the daily press (17), both as a means of improving public relations, and as an efficient way to make military orders widely known, depriving the members of an excuse for not knowing what was expected of them. A record of General Orders were kept in the Order Book, maintained at the Officers's Club, which, as mentioned earlier, functioned as an unofficial headquarters.\* The Order Book had all the characteristics of modern Routine Orders, dealing with the day to day tasks of military administration, including arrangements for military reviews, field firing exercises, target practices and continuous training camps. It also dealt with personnel particulars and listed periodic strength returns. Under the direction of various military commandants, a number of military publications and training manuals were issued.\*\*

\* The Order Book for 1883-1885 is at present in the possession of the Naval, Military and Air Force Club of South Australia.  
 \*\*Vide Appendix U.

By 1880 the military organisation, although still answerable to the chief-secretary, had in fact become a department, with its own permanent head, in accordance with Section 23 of the Civil Service Act No. 3 of 1874. The commandant was responsible for the expenditure and certification of the public funds. He had to sign all orders for supplies, and was also obliged to furnish a guarantee of payment from referees outside the service, a practice apparently quite common at that time in the civil service (18). Wet canteens were introduced in 1885 (19). Standard ration scales\* were implemented at about the same time (20) (21), though it must be noted that rations for the permanent force were smaller than for citizen soldiers when in camp. Also, the general omission of fruit and vegetables from the rations was not rectified till 1894. In the mid-eighties procedures were also instituted for the investigation of accidents, suffered in the course of military duty, and for appropriate compensation (22) (23) (24) (25).

\*  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs uncooked meat per day  
 $1\frac{1}{4}$  lbs bread per day  
 1 lb potatoes per day  
 3 oz tea per week



## 9.2 Military Organisation and Order of Battle, 1854-1901

The first phase (1854-1865) of military organisation began with the first volunteer legislations in 1854 (26). During this phase partially paid volunteers comprised the bulk of the South Australian military forces, loosely organised into a number of small, isolated units. Thus in 1854, a mounted company and a foot company were formed (27). A No. 1 Company was raised in Adelaide (28), as well as the Brighton and Sturt Yeomanry Cavalry (29). The order of battle\* was based on individual company/troop organisations of some 740 all ranks (30). Concerned by the fragmentation of units, the government in 1860 introduced a battalion organisation (31), to be known as The Adelaide Regiment of Volunteer Rifles, the average strength of which was of the order of 760 to 780 all ranks, with the number of companies varying from 12 to 15, distributed over the metropolitan area as far as Smithfield, Gawler and Brighton (32). Within a year a cavalry troop, the Reed Beds, two artillery troops, Adelaide and Port Adelaide and another twenty-eight individual infantry companies, ranging from 20 all ranks at Langhorne's Bridge to almost 100 in Kapunda, were in existence outside the battalion organisation in Adelaide, totalling over 2,000 all ranks (33).

The second phase (1865-1878) in the organisational history of the Colony's army was ushered in by the Hart Commission of 1865 (34). The subsequent Volunteer Act 1865/6 (35), endeavoured to overcome fragmentation of the force by stipulating that the minimum strength of an infantry company had to exceed 60 other ranks, while that of a cavalry troop

\* Vide Appendix W.

was to be not less than 18 other ranks. The Colony was divided into eleven districts,\* and the force consisted of an active component - four troops of cavalry, two half-batteries of artillery, and ten infantry companies - and a reserve force which was to be organised into ten companies also. For a few years, after the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1867, the regimental identity of the Adelaide Rifles changed to Prince Alfred's Rifle Volunteers. Not that a change of name aroused any increased enthusiasm. The volunteer movement languished for a number of years, with no change in organisation or in the order of battle, which by 1876 had an establishment of 60 officers and 1,000 other ranks, with an enrolled strength of about 800.\*\*

The military legislation 1878 (36) ushered in the third era of military organisation (1878-1886), which was to result in three separate military bodies, The Permanent Force, the Volunteer Military Force (VMF - the paid component) and the Rifle Volunteer Force (RVF - the unpaid component). Over the period in question, the VMF had three infantry companies in the Adelaide area, four in the suburbs, and three in the country, thereby maintaining the British standard battalion organisation of ten companies. In the middle eighties, in order to strengthen head-quarters organisations and to allow for the training of a larger number of officers, the South Australian government organised the Volunteer Military Force into two battalions of six companies each (37). The total strength of the Volunteer Military Force was at that time about 1,500.

\* Vide Appendix W1.

\*\* Vide Appendix W.

The Rifle Volunteer Force was a little stronger, and was organised into some 37 contingents, which called themselves companies, and varied in strength from 120 all ranks in Eastern Suburbs to 20 at Kurramulka\* (38).

The uneven strength of individual units not unreasonably prompted Brigadier/Owen to strongly advocate the disbanding of some of the companies and the amalgamation of others. However, the political influence of the R.V.F. was too strong and Owen apparently achieved no more than a change in designations. The Volunteer Military Force (V.M.F.) was renamed the Active Militia Force; the Rifle Volunteer Force (R.V.F.) became known as the Volunteer Force (39) until 1890, and thereafter as the Volunteer Militia Reserve Force (V.M.R.F.) (40).

The Active Militia Force organisation remained essentially as it had been prior to the passing of the 1886 legislation. The cavalry, The Adelaide Lancers, were of company strength, organised into two troops, or divisions as they were then called. There were two batteries of artillery, one field and one garrison, later (in 1895) expanded into two garrison batteries. The infantry, renamed Adelaide Rifles in 1879, now had a brass band and a drum and fife band, and by 1889 had acquired a veterinary section (41). It was organised into two, and subsequently (from 1890 onwards) into three battalions, with head-quarters in Adelaide. In 1892 the second battalion was transferred to Gladstone (42), and by 1895 the Active Militia Force was augmented by a machine gun corps and by a signals detachment (43). The 1886 legislation also brought about a redistribution of the Volunteer Force into district battalions, each with its own distinctive uniform (44). Meanwhile the

\* Appendix W.

mounted component of the Volunteer Force was itself re-organised into three battalions, with a total of 16 companies.

The changes introduced by Brigadier General J.F. Owen in 1886 ushered in the final phase (1886-1901) in the organisational pattern of South Australia's army, a significant phase because it introduced the frame within which the regimental reserve concept was to develop, along lines resembling the later British territorial or linked battalion system, where an active unit was backed up, so to speak, by its own organically linked reserve unit. The change was accomplished so quietly, that even the significance of renaming the Volunteer Force the Volunteer Militia Reserve Force (V.M.R.F.) escaped the watchful eyes of those who championed purely voluntary, un-paid service and sought its continued autonomy from the paid force. Only the Revised Standing Orders of 1891 and the Army List of 1892 hinted at the significance of the change: the Volunteer Militia Reserve Force companies were termed 2nd Battalion. In this manner the Gladstone, Laura and Crystal Brook companies became the 2nd Battalion, the reserve battalion of the first Regiment, Active Militia Force; the Riverton and Auburn companies comprised the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Regiment, and the Moonta and Mt. Gambier companies, the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Regiment. In 1895 the same arrangements were applied to the mounted units.

The 1886 and 1890 re-organisations began to show results. General efficiency improved, largely because the number of country centres was reduced to bring about a greater degree of rationalisation of effort in the larger townships. Of the original 16 Mounted Rifles centres only five remained, while seven new ones were established in such townships as

Port Pirie, which had grown rapidly due to the establishment of the smelting industry in 1839. Similarly, the infantry component of the reserve had been re-organised into seven <sup>each</sup> companies, with an establishment of 3 officers and 100 other ranks, to correspond to the infantry establishment of the Active Volunteer Force. In the case of mounted troops, the establishment varied from 25 to 50 all ranks, possibly as a concession to the more exclusive nature of the mounted force (45).

After the mid-nineties the sub-unit establishments for all formations were standardised on a fixed peace establishment.\* A mounted troop had one captain, two subalterns, one warrant officer, no colour sergeant, five sergeants, six corporals, no lance corporals, forty privates and two buglers: in all, 3 officers and 54 other ranks. The establishment of an infantry company was 5 officers and 100 other ranks, including one captain, four lieutenants, one colour and four ordinary sergeants, five lance and five ordinary corporals, eighty-three privates and two buglers. It is interesting to note that the infantry establishment was exactly the same as that envisaged by Finniss in 1858.

No discussion of the organisational changes in the Colony's army would be complete without some reference to the cost incurred by the colonists for local protection. In 1858 Finniss estimated that it would cost £875 to maintain a force of 100 paid volunteers, or nearly £8.15.0 per man (46). The consolidated cost tabulations\*\* for the period 1854-1885 show the annual cost per soldier to have been £11.4.0, reduced to £10.16.0 after 1886.\*\*\* Thus the cost of military protection

\* Vide Appendix X

\*\* Vide Appendix Z, Z 1.

\*\*\* Until 1885 expenditure returns were somewhat haphazard, which might account for the difference in quoted costs.

after 1870, that is, following the withdrawal of Imperial troops, was only about a quarter of what it would have been had the Colony opted for Imperial troops, at a rate of £40 per man, instead of relying on her own resources.

It is interesting to compare South Australia's military expenditure with that of the other colonies. The following table was compiled from figures quoted in the 1893/1894 annual reports of the South Australian commandants (47).

Colony	Population	Mil. Exp.	Military Strength	Expenditure	
				Per Soldier	Per Head of Population
New South Wales	1,191,050	£164,000	4,775	£34.0.0.	2s.9d.
Queensland	421,297	£ 50,000	2,767	£18.0.0.	2s.4d.
Victoria	1,167,329	£102,482	5,430	£19.0.0.	1s.9d.
South Australia	336,702	£ 21,877	2,300	£ 9.10.0.	1s.4d.

Clearly, both South Australia's gross military expenditure and expenditure per soldier were less than the costs incurred by the other colonies.

The story of the fortifications on the Adelaide seaboard, that is, the forts at Glanville and Largs and the torpedo defences at Port Adelaide illustrate more clearly than anything else the changing patterns in South Australia's defence policy.

Although in 1848, some 157 acres of land were set aside as 'Reserves for Military Purposes in the Cape Lannes and Cape Domberg areas, Guichen Bay' (48) the vulnerability of the Colony was quickly realised to lie in the Adelaide area. Thus the Torrens Island project for a twenty gun battery first discussed in 1855 (49), was planned in detail by Lieutenant-Colonel B.T. Finniss in 1858 (50) and redesigned in 1862 (51). An Imperial officer, Lieutenant E.T. MacGeorge, confirmed the desirability of a battery on the Island (52), as did Freeling and Scratchley five years later (53), but the Torrens Island project was superseded by proposals in favour of fixed defences in the Largs, Semaphore and Glenelg areas, championed by Colonels Biggs and Blyth but not acted upon by the government (54). The same pattern was to recur again and again: good advice not acted upon, favourable proposals viewed with suspicion.

In 1865, the South Australian government requested the advice of Sir Edward Lugard, then Secretary of State for War, on the type of armament most likely to suit coastal defence. The reply was that 400 pdr or 200 pdr Armstrong guns, made by the Elswick Ordnance Company and mounted on travelling carriages, would be ideal for the purpose. The price quoted for four guns of either calibre, inclusive of stores and first line ammunition, was £3,700 and £2,650 respectively (55). Complete specifications for various types of armaments, and a detailed cost estimate covering all associated stores, were subsequently

received (56). A student of artillery history would find Sir Edward's advice particularly interesting. Although, technically, Armstrong breech loading guns were in advance of their competitors, they were still considered as experimental (57), and therefore not favoured by the War Office. Similarly, controversy arose over the application of the Moncrief disappearing gun mounting (58). Normally, large guns had iron shields, which added to their weight and increased the number of men required to handle each gun. The design developed by a Colonel Moncrief enabled the gun to disappear while being re-loaded, thus protecting the gun crew. Hesitating to accept the radical design Britain seriously suggested that the mechanism should undergo trials in Australia before being generally adopted (59).\* A similar and much cheaper design was produced in Victoria and offered to South Australia, but there appears to be no record of the Colony's response, if any, to the offer (60).

Construction of the Semaphore battery, later called South battery, and eventually named Fort Glanville, began in 1878, based on a set of plans prepared in 1867/8 by a Major General Harding Stewart of the War Office and later modified by Jervois and Scratchley (61).\* Although construction was soon completed, it was a long time before the fort became effective. Initially funds were withheld for the levelling of sandhills near the fort, a seemingly minor requirement, but essential to provide an unrestricted field of fire, and protection against attack from the rear and to prevent sand drifts (62). The alternative, suggested by the military commandant, would have required constant watering and grassing of the parapet slopes.

\* The original plans can be inspected in the S.A. Archives.



Downes also advocated the erection of a fence, to keep cattle and children off the slopes (63). It was not until 1882 that the engineer-in-chief was instructed to attend to these minor yet important civil engineering details (64). Meanwhile, mechanical problems plagued the washing equipment and the pneumatic disappearing mechanism (65). The mechanical loading device gave trouble also, so that it was eventually done away with and the guns were loaded by hand (66).

The total armament at Glanville consisted of two rifled muzzle loading 10-inch coast guns, made in 1879 by Sir William Armstrong and Co., (67) and which by 1901 had fired some sixty rounds each.. The guns were flanked by two 64 pdr (6-inch) rifled muzzle loading siege guns (MK III) made in 1872 by the Royal Ordnance Factory, Woolwich (68). (These guns had originally been ordered for the sloops Adelaide and Yatala (69).) Somehow, no design details were available and the guns were mounted at Fort Glanville on over-bank siege carriages, resting on platforms which were too low, thus impairing the guns' efficiency when firing at moving targets (70). The fort also had some mobile armament, namely, one twelve-pdr, rifled muzzle loading Whitworth gun, 1867 vintage, with a polygonal bore, one five-barrel .45 inch Nordenfeld machine gun firing old Martini-Henry cartridges, and finally a museum piece, listed as being 'for instruction only' - a 32 pdr smooth bore muzzle loading ships cannon, manufactured at Woolwich in 1806 (71).\*

Fort Largs of the North Battery, as it was sometimes called, was complementary to Fort Glanville, <sup>by</sup> providing intersecting arcs of fire. The designs were largely prepared by Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Scratchley in 1878, with the active

\* For a detailed description the reader is referred to reference (72).

participation of Colonel Downes. The exact date of the start of construction is not known, and the original plans and specifications are no longer in existence (73). However, reports by Downes to the chief-secretary (74) indicate that work on the fort had probably commenced in 1880. The design of the fort closely resembled Glanville: lunette earthworks backed by concrete, the gorge enclosed by defensible barracks, loop-holed walls and stockades to protect the flanks of the lunette. For some reason, presumably in the interests of economy, the caponniere at Largs was of jarrah, as against concrete at Glanville, the ditch was entirely unriveted, and the guns had to be loaded in the open.

The forts' main armament consisted of two 9-inch twelve ton rifled muzzle loading (Mk I) coast guns (75), manufactured by the Royal Gun Factory at Woolwich in 1867, and imported into South Australia in 1868.\* They fired a 250 lb. projectile over a maximum range of 9,000 yards. At 3,600 yards the penetration was equal to the gun calibre (77). Between April 1884, and December 1901, the guns had fired a total of some 105 rounds (78). Two 80 pdr siege guns were mounted on the flanks and to the rear of the main armament. It would have been interesting to observe the blast effects when the whole armament of the fort was fired. There is no record that this ever happened. The two siege guns were a worry to the military. Besides having no platforms, they were of non-standard pattern and, since their origins were quite obscure, no service instructions could be obtained and serious maintenance difficulties were experienced (79). Both

\* For technical details of the 9-inch and 6-inch guns the reader is referred to references (58) and (76).

pieces were eventually sold for scrap and the surplus ammunition offered to Victoria at half of the purchase price (80). In their stead, but now in line with the main armament, two 6-inch (Mk V) Armstrong breech loaders, 1887 pattern, weighing 5 tons and mounted on Elswick hydro-pneumatic (disappearing gun) carriages were installed. By the end of 1901 these two guns had fired about 87 rounds between them.

In addition, the fort eventually acquired a motley array of mobile armament. There was a 12-pdr. rifled muzzle loader Whitworth field gun, made in 1867, a 0.45-inch Nordenfeld five-barrel machine gun, two 24-pdr. smooth-bore brass howitzers, made by Eccles in 1853, and two pdr. smooth-bore brass howitzers, made by H. and C. King in 1819. The four brass pieces were used for saluting purposes only. Finally, the fort had a 32-pdr. smooth bore muzzle loader, made by the Royal Gun Factory, Woolwich in 1862 (?), and a 2-pdr. rifled muzzle loader Whitworth mountain gun, of 1867 vintage, weighing barely more than 1 cwt (81).

Fort Glenelg, the fort that never was, was first proposed in the 1868 Wiseman report, which envisaged a Martello Tower type of fortification near the Glenelg flag staff, in addition to a three-gun battery in the Semaphore area and a fort on Torrens Island (82). But it was not until the Russian warships' visit in 1882 and the scare of 1885 that the project was looked at more closely.

Even before any definite plans were formed, the armament was ordered, in April 1885, from Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Co. (83). Two of the pieces, the 6-inch breech loader 5-ton siege guns, have already been mentioned. As its main armament Glenelg was to have two 9.2-inch breech loader (Mk. IV) guns, weighing 23 tons each, and measuring 25 ft in

length, mounted on Elswick hydro-pneumatic disappearing gun platforms. The first gun arrived in June 1886 on the ill-fated Star of Greece (84) and the other came shortly afterwards. Eventually, having been carried by barge to Glenelg, the guns were hauled up the sandhills, at a cost of £339.2.6 (compared with £800 shipping charges from London to Port Adelaide) (85). Captain F.R. Adlam writes:

The two 9.2-inch guns were landed at Glenelg and at 1901 were still lying on the shore, protected by galvanised iron sheds erected over them. The breech-mechanisms and a supply of bulk powder for charges finished up in store at Fort Largs; the HP mounting still in the unopened crates lay in store at Pt Adelaide together with 100 common shell, 30 shrapnel shell, 60 Palliser shot and 10 case shot, while 70 x 140-lb. and 30 x 200-lb. cartridges were stored in the Merchants' Magazine in Adelaide. By this time the two vent-axials were unserviceable and thus the two most powerful guns in the State (Nos. 5385 and 5437) were never mounted. For the record, these guns were constructed by the Elswick Ordnance Company in 1887 and weighed 23 tons. The sights were graduated for 2100 f/s for the 200 lb charge and 1720 f/s for the 140 lb charge. Strictly speaking they were not true Mk IV guns though they closely resembled this design. Judging by the wide separation of numbers they were two Mk IVs which went wrong during manufacture and were thus rejected by the British Government and thus would be a bargain buy for a young government on a thrifty budget. (86)

So the guns were there, but the fort was not. Gradually, surreptitious attempts were made to bury the idea of the fort altogether. At first, delays were blamed on the absence of design details for the guns (87), then on disagreements with the owner of the proposed site. By 1887 the government could say no more than that it had selected a site, and that some plans had arrived from England (88). A year later the government was attacked for allowing about £10,000 worth of 'iron mongery' lying idle in the sand and for losing the construction plans which had been prepared in London, without even having finalised the acquisition of the site.

The Premier, T. Playford, made it clear that his government was not anxious to approve a project for which it saw no need, and which was likely to cost the Colony some £70,000 to £80,000. The commandants' views differed. Walcott, from the navy, favoured the fort: presumably he realised that the Protector was fast becoming obsolete. Major-General Downes argued against it, using almost the same words as Playford did: unless there was to be a string of forts as far south as Marino, a fort at Glenelg would be of little use (89). A motion for a compromise - mounting the guns but not fortifying the area - was carried, but even this still required the acquisition of the land. The question was further debated in 1889 (90) and finally, after the Edwards' report had advised against the erection of the fort (91), the project was to all intents and purposes cancelled (92), and the bill for acquiring the site discharged (93).

Even before the Glenelg project was cancelled, the South Australian government tried to dispose of the rashly purchased guns. The suggestion to mount them on barges, as floating batteries, presented too many technical difficulties (94). Attempts to sell them to other colonies, or back to the makers, failed. Having been offered to practically any government that would listen,\* equally without success, the guns were dismantled, the barrels shipped to England and the mountings and projectiles sold as scrap in 1916 to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, at £2.10.0 per ton (95).

No discussion of fixed defences would be complete without referring to one other form of coastal defence in which South Australia was interested, namely, torpedo and submarine

\* Vide Appendix N.

mine defences for Port Adelaide and Port Pirie. The purchase of ten Whitehead torpedoes has already been mentioned. The station itself was erected by naval personnel on Torrens Island, using timber from the booms prepared during the 1885 scare (96). The Admiralty expressed an interest, from an Imperial defence point of view, in the mine defence of Port Pirie, since by that time the smelting industry had become fairly significant (97). Within a decade however the torpedo equipment was sold to the Admiralty, presumably because the maintenance costs were too high.\*

Fort Glanville and Fort Largs were built with the agreement of experts, with the almost unanimous sanction of parliament and with the full support of the public. 'The fort that never was' cost South Australia an appreciable amount of money which was, to all appearances, wasted. But was it? It might be argued that the disagreements and the prolonged debates which this expenditure engendered, assisted the Colony in clarifying her strategic thinking. The emphasis swung from 'bricks and mortar' to 'men and horses', that is, from fixed to mobile defences. It was followed by a change in the type of people who were to man the defences - professional military technocrats began to give way to amateur citizen soldiers.

\* Vide Appendix N 1.

The degree of preparedness of a force, once its administration is on a sound footing, depends directly on training. In South Australia military training consisted of teaching officers and non-/ commissioned officers basic military law and tactics, which were then applied when commanding troops at reviews, on ceremonial occasions, in field firing practices, in camps and in sham fights, a contemporary name for tactical exercises with troops. The only way to test readiness for local defence was through practice alarms.

The training of the South Australian soldiers must have been a formidable task. Army lists disclose that, apart from the commandants, only two officers had seen any active service. The theoretical training of the early commandants was also quite elementary. Finnis and Warburton had Sandhurst and Woolwich, but that training alone hardly fitted them for senior command. There is no record of Biggs having been trained in a military school. Therefore, Downes and Owen were the only commandants whose education, particularly their post-commission training, could be considered adequate. Nor did the officers have any means of furthering their military education beyond the barrack square. The very few text books issued in the Colony\* included only one non-South Australian publication, namely Eusk's Hythe Practices\*\*. (98)

As soon as he had taken command in South Australia in 1877, Colonel, later Major-General, Downes attempted to remedy this shortcoming by organising a series of lectures at the

\* Vide Appendix U.

\*\* A textbook based on the procedures laid down at the Small Arms School at Hythe.

Model School in Grote Street, Adelaide. The public lectures were intended for all members of the force, besides being a form of public relations. Downes hoped to dispose the colonists favourably towards the military and convince them that there was more to soldiering than just getting a body of uniformed men ready for a public review. Downes was systematic in his approach to all matters military. Characteristically, his first lectures dealt with principles governing the movement of a body of troops over a given distance, emphasising that before troops can fight they have to be moved into an assembly area (99). Other lectures dealt with the lessons to be learnt from recent campaigns in Europe and Asia, and with basic principles of war, including security and co-operation of all arms. Lectures dealing with rifle shooting invariably attracted the largest audiences. The citizen soldier was concerned with his personal weapon, the rifle; tactics, the way a number of rifles could be organised in relation to the terrain for the purpose of defeating an enemy, were not for him.

The military reviews,\* usually held in the South Parklands, or on Montefiore Hill, once or twice a year, were designed to show the public what it was getting for its money and to demonstrate the military strength of the Colony. Normally, the reviews were well attended. It was an outing for the family, an occasion for the men to wear their uniforms and an opportunity for all and sundry to voice their criticism of the troops' performance and turn-out. In earlier years the reviews were mainly of a ceremonial nature. The first occasion marked the return to South Australia of Lady MacDonnell, the wife of the governor, in March 1860 (100). The same year saw

\* Vide Appendix J.



the first presentation of Colours in South Australia at a fine parade held in the North Parklands in honour of the birthday of the Prince of Wales (101). The Colour was presented by Lady MacDonnell and consecrated by Dean Farrell. The band played Linger's music to Mrs. Carleton's Song of Australia, and the five hundred troops and the public were drenched by a heavy shower. Allegedly, 'the reverberation caused by the firing of the cannon appeared to break the stormy clouds which threateningly floated overhead ...' (102).

That such reviews often included some tactical movements can be seen from the programme of a review in 1863\*. In fact, the reviews were 'aimed at testing the efficiency of the best companies rather than provide a public spectacle' (103), and the parade attendance was often taken as a barometer of the volunteers' interest. Thus, an attendance of 80 or so rank and file at a battalion parade in North Terrace was considered a sign of low morale, only slightly relieved 'by the performance of a variety of martial airs and other music rendered by a fair muster of the regimental band' (104). Still, a combination of music and uniforms could be impressive. The procession of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, through the streets of Adelaide, on 2nd November, 1867, was followed by the second South Australian Colour presentation and by church parades the next day. About 700 volunteers mustered, to the admiration of the press:

Without challenging any comparison with the Scots Greys or the Guards, we can say of our mounted volunteers, that yesterday they did credit to themselves and to the colony. A Military critic might have seen a good deal in their appearance to suggest some improvements, but he would find much more of the same thing in the English Yeomanry.  
(105)

\* Vide Appendix R.

Imperial troops played a very minor role on these occasions. When they did participate, as in the parade of 1867, they acted as groundsmen and did not take precedence over the colonial troops (106). It may interest the military reader to know that on the above occasion two Colours were presented, instead of one, as in 1860: a Queen's Colour, brought from England, and a Regimental Colour, which was the work of an Adelaide lady (107).

February 1869 witnessed a Gilbert and Sullivan performance when the return visit of Duke of Edinburgh coincided with the arrival of Sir James Ferguson, the new governor of the Colony. The Duke arrived in the morning. The Rangatira, with the governor on board, followed unexpectedly two hours later. To give the governor a chance to be officially received, the Duke went quietly to a party at Highercombe. A description of the event in the Observer is quoted below: it shows the somewhat sarcastic attitude of the press to regal and vice-regal functions:

In every spare corner, drays and conveyances of all kinds had insinuated themselves, each with a load of fully primed admirers for the new Governor and Lady Edith. With a flutter of female millinery, the scrambling of the top coats, the chaffing of Portonian wits, the restlessness of Portonian dignitaries and the general surging of the hastily gathered crowd, squeezing itself into the smallest possible square, ... present a picturesque scene about half past five o'clock. For a fortuitous demonstration to be got up on an hours notice, it was wonderfully effective. The Portonians have not always been fortunate in their almanack 'DeGotha' business, but an unqualified success like this should console them for all their past mishaps.(108)

This was a reference to the difficulty which had arisen over the Duke of Edinburgh's reception in 1867, when he landed at Glenelg instead of, as its citizens had requested, at Port Adelaide.

From the middle eighties, the annual review became a general muster. The attendance figures, however, do not

show any pattern from which valid conclusions can be drawn (109), nor could the general efficiency of the troops be gauged on such occasions. However, more exacting inspections were introduced in the early nineties, different arms being inspected separately (110).

If the popular appeal of the reviews was any indication, the military force had become an accepted institution. On one occasion an estimated 10,000 spectators scrambled over the review area, hampering the movement of the troops (111). Public approval was reflected in the affectionate nicknames bestowed on the various arms. Thus, the mounted troops were referred to as Mud-Rakers, the field and garrison artillery as the Four Wheeled Cavalry and Sandpipers respectively. The infantry were Hoochas and the signallers, Flag Wavers. The medical troops had the nicknames of Corpse Raisers, Body Snatchers and Poultice Pushers (112).

No army ceremonial would be complete without gun salutes\* or decorations. The latter should be mentioned here, illustrating as it did the unique character of the colonial forces in the context of the British military organisation. From the 1890's there were frequent suggestions that a colonial volunteer decoration should be struck (113), while New South Wales recommended an all Australian decoration (114). In South Australia, a medal for the Colony's permanent force was accepted under regulations similar to those existing in the Imperial service (115). The decoration in question was a long-service cum good-conduct medal, eventually styled Volunteer Decoration. However, conditions applicable to Imperial troops had to be changed: no colonial soldier could be expected to

\* Vide Appendix Q.

serve eighteen years, as was mandatory for his Imperial counterpart, in order to be eligible for the award (116). A Royal Warrant, dated 29th May, 1894, prompted Colonel Gordon's decision that without special permission service in the partially paid forces of the Colony could not be counted. Despite confirmation by Imperial authorities, the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne, suggested that technicalities and nomenclature should not bar officers from receiving this grant, and consequently local officers were invited to submit their claims for individual decision (117). The old problem of paid versus unpaid forces was making itself felt once again. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Chamberlain, considered the term militia a misnomer, because for all military purposes there was no difference between a colonial militia regiment and a colonial volunteer regiment. Colonial troops were, in effect, volunteers receiving temporary pay, whereas the English militia was totally different organisationally - when embodied, it came under the Imperial Army Act (118). The Crown circumvented the thorny question by issuing a Royal Warrant, dated 18.5.1899, for a Colonial Auxiliary Forces Long-Service Medal (119), enabling the colony of Victoria to issue regulations under the said warrant. As for South Australia, she chose not to concern herself with finer points of interpretation. The legislation of 1895 omitted any reference to militia or volunteers, a compulsorily or voluntarily enrolled force. With the original Royal Warrant of 1894 still applicable, the government issued regulations for the issue of the Volunteer Long Service Medal (120). The medals were imported, at price of £1.0.0, from the English firm of Garrard of London (121).

### Firing Practices

The small arms\* firing practices conducted in South Australia received considerable public attention, possibly due to a certain romantic aura surrounding the citizen soldier concept - that every able-bodied man should be capable of using arms in the defence of his country. Thus, almost from the beginning, reports were frequently published of this particular activity, and a large proportion of the military budget was devoted to the purchase of small arms ammunition:\*\* in 1860 the expenditure was 17 per cent of the total military expenditure of £11,240 (122).

Although volunteers were on the whole better marksmen than Imperial regulars (123), it was generally accepted that rifle shooting, conducted as a sport, produced better results than when conducted under military conditions, since firing with bayonets fixed, in the standing-up position, often failed to produce the six marksmen required from each company. It was obviously harder than firing without bayonets, kneeling down, or in the prone position (124). To qualify for marksman and first class shot it was necessary to fire five rounds, later ten, over distances of 700, 800 and 900 yards. Anybody not scoring at the first two ranges was disqualified. The same procedure was adopted for the second class shots over ranges of 400, 500 and 600 yards. The sport was well worth competing in in the sixties, and some 250 contestants did, each year: first prize for a marksman was a gold medal and £60 in cash (125).

By the early eighties firings could no longer be conducted in the South Parklands; safety procedures were unable to keep women and children out of the field of fire. (126)  
\* Vide Appendix N for a discussion on small arms in South Australia.  
\*\*Vide Appendix P.

The range was moved to Dry Creek. Although officers and men competed together, there was a custom that officers should not take prizes away from the other ranks: a Lieutenant Baker won the gold medal in 1887 and gave it to the runner-up, a Sergeant Marlow (127). The shoots were generally held in a picnic atmosphere, with refreshments liberally provided. A vivid description of the annual class firing at Wallaroo in 1887 (128), highlights the fact that these activities had assumed an important place in the life of the community. Even the professional military acknowledged this, but at the same time they criticised the emphasis placed on rifle shooting. From a military point of view, target practice, particularly over the larger ranges, was a complete waste of time, however enjoyable. It was for this reason that Downes endeavoured to turn the ardour for rifle shooting into a useful military exercise by introducing disappearing targets. They were made of canvas, hinged and operated by butt men under cover. Downes' aim was to improve the military efficiency of the force in fire and movement (129). There is no evidence that he succeeded.

Almost as much publicity was given to the target firing by the South Australian artillery.\* At first the practices were conducted on a detachment basis, that is, the troop mustered at the gun sheds, horsed one nine-pounder field gun and one twelve-pounder howitzer, and took them to the beach, where each member, supervised by a staff sergeant, qualified with two rounds of shot and two rounds of shell. After lunch, usually taken at a nearby hotel,\*\* the firing was

\* Vide Appendix N for a discussion of ordnance in South Australia.

\*\*A picnic atmosphere seemed to be quite marked in the citizen artillery, who preferred to conduct their business in the Gresham Hotel or in the Scotch Thistle rather than in the gun sheds. Similarly, conviviality played a conspicuous part in the garrison artillery. 'During the firing practice, some of the visitors inspected the officers' quarters, thirty yards away from the battery. It was interesting to note the effect of the firing ... the bottles jumped about the table'. (130)

continued till after sundown (131). By the eighties, eagerly sought prizes of £18, £12, and £10 respectively were being awarded for the handling and firing of twelve-pounder field guns (132). Field firings were conducted at Dry Creek, over ranges of 1,100, 1,200 and 1,450 yards, using the sixteen-pounder Woolwich guns, firing ordinary shells, and the twelve-pounder Whitworth guns firing octo-spheroidal  $5\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>in</sup>-solid shot (133). The annual competitions were important to the other ranks because when a man qualified as gun captain (successful completion of 60 per cent of the tests), he was entitled to a special badge and a special allowance, and the same applied to the driver (134)(135).

Similar to the vanishing targets for the infantry were the moving targets Colonel Downes introduced for the artillery. A gun with horses, painted on a board to simulate its appearance at a distance of 1,000 yards, was suspended on a wire and could be drawn between two uprights. Competitors had to bore a fuse, sponge and load the gun, lay it, and give the order to fire (within the quickest time consistent with proper gun drill), and hit the moving target (136). Firing practice by the sixteen-pounder field artillery, against moving targets at sea over ranges of 2,000 yards, extended realism even further (137).

#### Field Exercises

Tactical exercises with troops at first took the form of sham fights in the area of Montefiore Hill. Once again it was Downes who introduced tactical exercises in the field. The first recorded instance was of a pick-and-shovel exercise at Dry Creek in August 1879, intended to give training in the preparation of field defences. Each man was required

to dig a trench of 5' x 2'6" x 1½' deep within 30 minutes (138).

In 1884 the press described a very realistic exercise, simulating a night attack on Fort Glanville (139), employing opposing forces. The attacking force consisted of Port Adelaide and Hindmarsh companies, under Captains Martin and Hawker, while the defenders were members of the permanent artillery force and of one of the volunteer artillery units, under the overall direction of Colonel Downes. Infantry had silently been deployed along the sandhills on the left flank of the fort and launched the attack from a distance of 400 yards. Unfortunately, co-ordination of training activities had failed somehow. Another rifle company, unaware of the exercise, was drilling near the convalescent home (Escourt House). It was surprised by the attacking force during its advance, and taken prisoner.\*

Downes also introduced combined arms and combined services exercises. Cavalry and infantry would engage in skirmishing exercises near the beach, for instance, often with the aim of simulating the repulsion of an enemy landing. During the 1885 mobilisation, a very realistic exercise was conducted to repel an enemy who had disembarked a force from six cruisers standing off Glenelg, out of range of the fort. Regrettably the exercise was organised apparently on the spur of the moment, which detracted somewhat from the realism that could have been achieved: the enemy had placed himself in a tactical position on the sandhills which was completely insecure, a mistake even the least experienced Muscovite subaltern would not have made (140).

An ambitious, combined military/naval exercise was conducted in November, 1885, under the direction of Brigadier-General Owen (141). The exercise envisaged a seaborne enemy

\* For references to the various field exercises the reader is referred to Appendix P.



attack to the south of Marino, which was either to be repelled or to be contained. Failing both, the enemy was to be observed and his advance delayed as long as possible, to give the reserve and country companies time to concentrate in their positions south of Adelaide. The officer commanding the defence force, learning from his scouts that he was too weak to oppose the landing against the guns of the enemy ship, was to take up positions on the spurs running down to the sea. Elements of the attacking force disembarked from the Protector, while the main force was taken by special train to Morphettville and concentrated at O'Halloran Hill. Meanwhile, the defending force assembled near Marino, astride the Glenelg-Brighton road. The exercise was highly successful, though it is not quite clear who won the battle, which ended in a march past by all participating contingents. The second Marino exercise, fifteen years later, was not quite on the same scale because the Protector did not take part, but the military lessons learned were perhaps more useful: troops did not always take sufficient cover, officers did not pay enough attention to detail and did not give very good orders (142).

Some exercises were designed to test isolated operations only. These included a reconnaissance exercise between the V.M.F. and the R.V.F. (143), an advance to contact through hostile country (144), night exercises in outpost duties for the Lancers etc. (145). All the exercises received wide publicity and illustrated the strategic thinking of the day, where enemy cruisers rounded Kangaroo Island and invariably surprised the signal station at Cape Borda, while another enemy party would be landing via Light's Passage, in order to take the fort from the rear and turn its guns on the troops moving

out from Adelaide (146). An alternative scheme had the enemy land at Victor Harbour, seize the telegraph office and entrain a party en route to Adelaide, making Mt. Lofty the attack position on Adelaide (147). Actually, all the plans were feasible, and certainly quite practical, as a General Idea for field exercises.

#### Camps of Continuous Training

The idea of holding camps of continuous training\* was first mooted in 1861, but met with little enthusiasm on the part of the government: the troops ought to be harvesting, rather than waste time learning camp and sentry duties. The main reason for the government's attitude was the expense for two days rations, calculated at 10/- per day per man. Camps were not popular. Even eighteen years later, rumours of an Easter camp (Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday) brought forth letters expressing unwillingness 'to give up good holidays' (148). By the early eighties, however, the practice of holding Easter camps was firmly established. One such four day camp opened with an advance through hostile country between Adelaide and Highbury. The troops reached their destination, after a sham fight near the Hope Valley Reservoir.

In the early years the paid and the unpaid branches held their camps separately. The camps conducted by the Rifle Volunteer Force (RVF) had a picnic atmosphere about them. The first R.V.F. camp began with a march-out, led by the brass band, up to Belair, where the troops stayed awake and 'gabbled all night and altogether [acted] like a Women's Rights Committee'. On reaching Meadows, the 'War Correspondent'

\* For a list of selected reference on camp activities the reader is referred to Appendix O.

went on, they were opposed by the local force, organised by Lieutenant Catt. 'Each man had his own fouling piece, volleys were fired and prisoners were taken, but they were just locals ignorant of the rules of war. The camp followers were many, mainly ladies' (149). Clearly, the unpaid component of the force enjoyed great popularity in South Australia.

This was even more obvious in 1885 when the Rifle Volunteer Force camp at Balaclava was organised. It was the hey day of the true volunteers. The cost of 10/- per man, per day, and any excess expenditure was guaranteed by the officers, as was the custom in the English volunteer movement.\* Accommodation was, however, limited. The 36 tents made available by the army had to accommodate 20 officers and 250 other ranks. Training was carried through the night and the camp even had 'war correspondents', who brought out a daily camp gazette (150). It is interesting to note that half of the troops attending the Balaclava camp were, in fact, members of the paid force, paying their own expenses. The point was well taken by some members of the public.

I am ashamed to belong to a country ruled by such narrow minded petty fogging Government ... I trust, Mr Editor, you will do your best to raise a fund to reimburse the volunteers the cost of the Balaclava trip for which purpose I endorse my mite [£1] . (151)

In the eighties, camps for the paid Volunteer Militia Force (VMF) were also voluntary, that is, no pay was made available. This imposed hardship on some of the members, because employers were not always willing to grant employees the required leave. To reduce absence from work to a minimum, the commandant had men of the permanent forces set up the

\* The ration scale was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs of meat,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs of bread,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz coffee,  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd oz of tea, 3 ozs sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz salt,  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd oz pepper, 2 lbs potatoes, 1 gill of milk.

camp near Fort Largs (152).

The Easter camps between 1889 and 1891 were the high water marks of camp activities in South Australia, with the garrison artillery camping at Glanville, and the remainder in the Keswick area. The camps in those years numbered 1,000, 1,200 and 1,380 all ranks respectively. But it was largely the paid component that was found in the camps. The unpaid force must have lost some of its eagerness: only about 8 per cent came from that branch (153). The 1891 camp must have been interesting. The first Sunday was a wash out: torrential rains precluded any military activities and the canteen services (wet) competed with the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who supplied refreshments free of charge, accompanied by sermons advocating temperance (154).

The depression of the early nineties reduced expenditure for the active militia force, the paid component, from £10,499 in 1893/4, to £7,639 in 1894/5 (155), but Colonel J.M. Gordon judiciously 'adjusted' the estimates to make camps possible, by transferring £2,000, set aside for musketry practice, to his general training funds on the grounds that 'musketry efficiency was now above average'. This enabled him to provide the necessary transport for camp stores and other equipment, while rations took the form of public donations. Consequently the troops, particularly in the northern districts lived like fighting cocks. Donations from Port Pirie, for instance, included a case of whisky, a ton of hay, two bullocks, bags of flour, barrels of beer, etc., all for a parade state of 150 all ranks, assembled at Gladstone for two days.

In the last few years before federation, camps again became a regular activity, and included field firing exercises as well. However, much criticism could be, and was levelled,

particularly at the night exercises, for despite all the effort lavished on the training of individual arms, their performance in combined exercises left a great deal to be desired. Mounted troops protecting artillery did not dismount and take their horses under cover, gun positions were changed without escorts, instructions were misinterpreted, and whole companies became detached and lost each other. Nevertheless, even when measured by present day standards, the camps must have been effective: there was an air of enthusiasm, and evidence of professional efficiency in the organisation.

#### Security - Communications - Mobilisation

One could not claim that South Australians were particularly mindful of military security. An enemy agent would have been amply rewarded just by following the daily press, where lengthy descriptions and discussions of military activities appeared regularly. He would not have found it necessary, for instance, to make a reconnaissance of the forts; <sup>published</sup> the/descriptions were as good as blue prints. This state of affairs disturbed some members of the public who, in 1885, advocated what virtually amounted to general military censorship (156).

Not that security precautions were ignored altogether. During the Crimean war, a secret Anglo-French signal code was communicated to the governor, for use by the harbour authorities (157), and special shipping regulations came into force at the same time (158). But the first concrete steps towards military security were not taken till 1889, when a general order was issued to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to defence establishments (159). The following year saw the

passing of the Safety of Defences Act 1890 (160). It was later incorporated in toto into The Defences Act 1895 (161), and provided for the prosecution of people making sketches, taking photographs, etc. in or near defence installations, and of civil servants or military personnel giving information about defence installations. At about the same time, the Marine Board issued regulations governing the movement of foreign ships in coastal waters in times of emergency (162).

Under the impact of the Boer War, the British Government endeavoured to prevent the colonies from trading with the enemy. There was evidence that a Mr. Holz had chartered two ships, The Linnea from Port Pirie, and the Albany from Port Adelaide, both bound for Delagoa Bay, with South Australian flour on board consigned to the Boers. Little could be done, since Mr. Holz was highly regarded in business circles (163), though the government did co-operate with Britain to the extent of issuing a special proclamation, based on section 119 of the Customs Act, 1864, prohibiting the export of arms, ammunition and of any goods which may be turned into warlike stores (164).

At first communications played a very minor part in military planning, because technically they were only in their infancy at the beginning of the century. When the Russian cruiser Svetlana in 1862 sailed straight through the Heads of Port Phillip Bay without raising any alarm, the question was asked, what was the use of spending £36,286 on coastal forts when a privateer could still sail straight past them (165). It was a time of potential war with America, news of the outbreak of which would have been conveyed from San Francisco by a hostile vessel. At the same time the Royal Navy could not patrol the entire coast line. All that could be done was to

institute an alarm system consisting of blue lights on conspicuous landmarks, the ringing of church bells, and the firing of rockets (166) (167). In 1865 the South Australian Government instructed (168) Charles Todd, the Superintendent of Telegraphs, to prepare an estimate of the costs involved in connecting the lighthouses at Cape Borda and Cape Willoughby with Normanville, from where line communication with Adelaide had previously been established. In addition, the cost of connecting Glenelg with Troubridge Shoal was to be investigated. The lowest estimate was nearly £15,000, sufficient to frighten the legislature into abandoning any idea of communications of this nature (169).\* The government's reluctance may have been justified. The most sophisticated communications system would have proved futile if the enemy could pass by the lighthouse keepers, unnoticed and unreported.\*\* By the early eighties a sufficiently well developed civil communication network was in existence. As for the military heliograph equipment, it was operated by the Posts and Telegraphs Department - Colonel Downes felt that military communications were too important to be left in the hands of the volunteer soldiery. (171)

There remained the problem of providing tactical communications between fixed defence installations, the road and rail links between them and Adelaide, and the means of deploying mobile defence forces along the coast line and the approaches to Adelaide. In the Colony's early days, before

\* Vide Appendix K.

\*\* On one occasion, in 1885, a Russian squadron appeared off Glenelg without warning. On another, a very embarrassing incident, the Austrian warship Saida arrived off Glenelg just before sunset on 15th January 1891, only to find that when the ship fired the customary 21 gun salute, there was no reply from the forts. The permanent artillery made the excuse of not having been advised and of expecting the Protector to return the courtesy. The Saida courteously suggested that since she had fired just on sunset, she could not really expect the fort to reply (170). The truth, probably, was that the garrison had 'knocked off' for the day.

rail and road communications between Adelaide and Semaphore were established, all logistic support for the forts had to come from Port Adelaide which was already in railway communication with Adelaide. The most logical, tactically secure, primary means of communication, therefore, would have been a military road from Port Adelaide, along the coast, as far south as Marino. The military road became a firm requirement when the plans to fortify Torrens Island gave way to the fortification proposals in the Semaphore and Glenelg areas (172). In 1864 government voted £20,000 for defence and the road was staked out (173), but no construction was commenced - the area was too sparsely populated to justify the cost, except for purely military purposes. The Freeling-Scratchley report of 1866 compromised with a road to Glenelg, at a cost of £5,000 (174), the Finniss Commission of 1876 reaffirmed the construction of the road 'as absolutely necessary' (175). Finally Jervois recommended the extension of the proposed road to Marino, at an estimated cost of £15,000 (176), but it was not until 1882 that the road was capable of carrying the military traffic to be expected between Port Adelaide and the two forts (177).

When the crisis of 1885 brought the military road sharply into focus, it was found to be practically non-existent, little more than pegs, a few culverts over the natural water courses, and a military bridge across the Patawalonga Creek near Glenelg (202). The government must have assumed that, since Port Adelaide was connected with the City by a state railway, since a private railway ran from Glenelg to Adelaide, and since Semaphore was no more than a postal terminal for P. and O. liners, the road would have remained virtually unused and too costly to maintain.



As an alternative, a coastal railway - much cheaper to construct and to maintain - was seriously considered (179). A temporary railway between Glenelg and Grange was actually laid down in May/June 1885 (180), intended to be raised at the end of the emergency, but having obtained a line of communication, at no cost to the residents, the two district councils wanted it to remain (181). Their voices were reinforced by adjoining district councils. The line stayed\* and the track was subsequently consolidated (182).

#### Mobilisation

The crisis in 1885 was the nearest to actual warfare that South Australians were to experience during their pre-federation history. Until that time, little thought had been given to emergency planning, largely because none of the preceding war scares were pressing enough. There was only one instance, in 1862 when the South Australian Government decided to call out the volunteers for one week's permanent duty (183), and records suggest that, even if the volunteers were, in fact, assembled, this mobilisation did not proceed according to plan, because military regulations were henceforth amended to incorporate provisions for immediate turn-out 'upon a given signal either by day or by night' (184).

When the crisis of 1885 loomed, no concrete emergency measures were in existence, with the possible exception of a vague plan to deny a hostile fleet access to the coal stocks at Wallaroo (185). There is some evidence that Colonel Downes, prior to his departure in April 1885, had forwarded to the chief-secretary a memorandum, 'What to do in the event of war' (186), but no details of his recommendations are known.

\* Eventually the line was extended to Port Adelaide, but was discontinued between Henley Beach and Glenelg.

By the middle of April 1885 war with Russia seemed imminent. In the absence of any advance planning, a Council of War was held, which had all the marks of a panic meeting. The ministry may have heard of Lincoln's dictum, that war was too serious a business to be left to the generals, so none of military experts were present. £25,000 was voted for the construction of Fort Glenelg and for the purchase of two 9.2-inch guns. Another £12,000 was approved for a variety of measures, including the construction of a light railway between Semaphore and Glenelg, the storing of coal supplies at Port Adelaide for use by Her Majesty's ships, the removal inland of the Wallaroo coal stocks, the encamping of the volunteer garrison artillery at Largs and Glanville, the enrolment of volunteers at Glenelg and Brighton, the fitting of sparr torpedoes to the launches Diana and Victoria, two 6-inch breech loader guns and two electric search lights for the coast guard vessels Adelaide and Yatala, and finally, the accommodation of all British merchant ships in the inner harbour.

Not one of these measures, with the exception of removing merchant men from their anchorages, could have been implemented at a moment's notice. These ministerial panic decisions contrasted rather markedly with the very practical steps recommended by the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, Captain Jervois. He suggested the erection of a stockade behind Fort Largs, to prevent capture from the rear, and the laying of a telephone line between the forts. He recommended that field officers be given the power to raise local detachments and to prepare plans for mobilising the country districts. Jervois established a system of alarm signals: a two-gun fire and a square red flag during day time, and a two-gun and two

mortar fire plus blue lights during the night. The measures recommended by Jervois would not have cost the Colony anywhere near the £25,000 voted by the government.

At the beginning of the crisis, all coal stocks at Kadina and Wallaroo were secured (187),<sup>(188)</sup> plans were finalised for mounted patrols between Glanville and Glenelg for the protection of which 2,000 sandbags were stacked (189), and the Kapunda rifle company was alerted for an early movement to Adelaide (190). Time passed; war anxiety mounted; more and more Councils of War were held (191). As a result, two 24-pdr. howitzers were positioned at Glenelg beach near the Patawalunga Creek (192) and the lighthouses were extinguished, much to the annoyance of the local shipping community. There was talk of augmenting the first line ammunition holdings and of the need for alternative cable connections at Darwin, because Admiral Tryon had expressed fears about the safety of communications with England (193).

For eight days, from the 2nd May, 1885, the garrison artillery was put into camp. At the same time, the Mounted Rifles, the field artillery and the infantry (nine companies) were held in camps for six days (194). The camps were, in effect, assembly areas for troops immediately required for the defence of Adelaide. The second line of defence was prepared by planning the later mobilisation of the Northern Districts.\*

The hall mark of preparedness for local defence was the time required to move a military force into a position where it would be capable of repulsing an enemy landing. To test

\* For a description of the mobilisation camps and the general activities of the troops see Appendix Q and references cited under (195).

this, exercises generally referred to as call-outs were conducted (195) during the 1885 crisis (196). At Kapunda, some 60 troops mustered within 25 minutes (197), and in Adelaide and Port Adelaide, upon a simultaneous alarm signal, some 450 troops assembled in such a manner that they could have been in their defensive positions within two hours at the latest, provided railway transport to the coast had been instantly available (198). The speed with which troops assembled almost leads one to suspect a leakage of information, giving the troops prior knowledge of the alarm. But since the artillery took twice as long to assemble as did the other arms, the exercise must have been a genuine test of readiness. There were several reasons for the slow assembly of the field artillery. Contrary to normal procedure, the guns were run into the dilapidated gun sheds breech-end first, to prevent incoming rain from causing rust on the breech, and the layout of the harness shed was such that troops could not get the harnesses out quickly in the dark, taking over half an hour just to harness up (199). All this meant that the infantry would have been without artillery support during the crucial stages of an enemy landing.

Both the call-out exercises, and the experience gained during the crisis of 1885, had a salutary effect on military planning. As soon as Downes returned to South Australia, in 1887, he began to plan proper mobilisation procedures. First of all, he arranged for the alarm signals to be transmitted by local police stations (200). The new method was tested in March, 1889 (201): at 8.30 p.m. alarm rockets were fired from the parade ground on North Terrace and the police stations in the country centres were notified

simultaneously. Within the hour, the vanguards were in position on the sandhills, commencing general patrol activities. Country centres turned out equally rapidly. Not all of the subsequent call-out exercises were as successful, particularly as far as the unpaid component was concerned; in July 1889, a mere 47 ranks of the Rifle Volunteer Force turned out alongside 690 of the militia (202).

The major contribution towards planning for preparedness for local defence consisted of three memoranda submitted by the service chiefs to the government, two by General M.F. Downes, in 1889 and 1891 (203), and one by Commander J. Walcott, also in 1891 (204). Downes' first memorandum was completely ignored by the government, because of its political implications. Downes contended that, before South Australia could lay a sound foundation of defence preparedness, she would have to accept the principle of long-term defence funding.

In order to give a sure basis upon which to work, a Special Appropriation Act for a term of at least five years should be passed as in Victoria in order to lift the Defence vote out of party interests and to be independent of the Government of the day when estimates are prepared. (205)

This revolutionary proposal was very sound from a planning point of view, particularly with respect to implementing the twenty odd specific recommendations Downes had appended to his general submission, but no South Australian politician would have risked his future on legislation which was not only contrary to the political traditions of the dissenters - the principle of the Mutiny Acts was their credo - but which would have given carte blanche to future governments and military administrators working under conditions which might have been quite different from those existing at the time such an act was passed.

Downes' second memorandum, submitted in conjunction with Commander Walcott's, was a comprehensive four-phase plan

to place the armed services on a war footing. The four phases outlined the measures to be taken in time of peace, when war became probable, when war was imminent, and when war was declared.

Phase one, in peacetime for the army, dealt with increases in strength, mainly in the form of reserves, replacement of obsolete ordnance and the stocking of war-like stores (camp equipment, wire entanglements), the purchase of horses, and the survey of forward observation camps and shelter trenches in the parklands. For the navy, proposals were similar, emphasising the need for improved signal and communication arrangements, and the protection of Port Pirie.

Phase two, war probable, recommended hospitalisation arrangements, the supply of horses, fodder and food, ammunition and water, railway transport arrangements, provision for the security of signal communications to and from Darwin, and the handling of coal stores at Wallaroo. Phase two also envisaged the staking-out of forward observation posts and the drafting of proclamations for mobilisation of personnel, the placing of any district under military law, legalising of impressment and control of foreign vessels and the instruction of municipal authorities in civil defence measures.

Phase three, war imminent, envisaged the militia being put into a holding camp, the mounted troops being put into forward observation areas, and the forts being garrisoned with infantry. In addition, first line ammunition was to be issued and provisions were to be stored. The navy envisaged that the auxiliary vessels would tow sailing ships to safety and that submarine mines and port booms would be positioned in their pre-arranged locations at Port Adelaide and Port Pirie.

Phase four, war declared, was to begin with the removal of coal from Wallaroo. Military law was to be declared over Military District No. 1 (Adelaide), and the Rifle Volunteer Force was to be called out and encamped at Wallaroo, Port Augusta, and Port Pirie, with the remainder to be concentrated near Adelaide. In addition, the navy required that certain light-houses should be extinguished and the proposed second Darwin cable connected up.

This rather detailed discussion of the mobilisation plans has been included to illustrate progress made since 1885. Had a hostile fleet then attempted to land a force of battalion strength, say about one thousand men, the enemy may have succeeded in gaining a foothold, at least temporarily, because of the general uncertainty in South Australia regarding what should be done, when, and where. Once clear-cut plans for a phased mobilisation were drawn up, an enemy attempting a landing in the early nineties would have faced an immeasurably better organised resistance.

A direct comparison of South Australia's military efficiency with that of other forces is difficult to make, but, when viewed in the light of modern military practice, the conclusion can be drawn that South Australian military planners, in the last quarter of the century particularly, exhibited a professionalism which had all the marks of modern military efficiency. The manner in which the South Australian mobilisation in 1885 was accomplished, and the subsequent improvements in military planning, augured well for the raising, training and dispatch to South Africa of the first Boer War contingent.

CHAPTER XPREPAREDNESS FOR IMPERIAL WAR

As soon as the Ministerial proposal to dispatch a South Australian contingent to the Transvaal had obtained the seal of legislative sanction, the authorities at the Staff Office set about making all necessary arrangements for the equipment of the men in real earnest.

Observer, October, 1899 (1)

We bind ourselves from 17th October, 1899, and until discharged to be subject of the provisions of the Army Act ... as if we had been severally attested for Her Majesty's Army for general services ... and as if the South Australian Volunteer contingent formed part of Her Majesty's Army ...

Attestation for South Africa  
October, 1899 (2)

Government of South Australia desires to offer the South Australian gunboat Protector manned or otherwise, as convenient, at cost of Imperial Government.

Lord Tennyson to Colonial  
Office, July, 1900 (3)



10.1 Mobilisation for South Africa

Involvement in the South African conflict proved an excellent test of South Australia's preparedness for Imperial War, that is, the extent to which her defence machinery was ready to meet the demands of organising an expeditionary force for service overseas in the interests of Empire defence. The social aspects of South Australia's first war have been discussed by Hayden (4), and the actual war history of that campaign may be read in official records (5).

The contingents dispatched to South Africa fell into three categories. The first two contingents were equipped and paid from colonial revenue and one contingent, the South Australian Bushmen's Corps, by private subscription. Then there were the Imperial Bushmen, subsidised by the British Government, and finally, after federation, came the Commonwealth contingents. The Imperial Bushmen and the Commonwealth contingents received Imperial pay, while the earlier contingents received colonial pay.\*

The organisation of the contingents from South Australia bore little resemblance to the establishments arrived at by the Inter-Colonial Military Committee in 1896, or by the conference of the military commandants just prior to the outbreak of the war.\*\* It was a question of filling the quota, that is of filling what had been sanctioned by the legislature including reinforcements. Thus, the first contingent's five officers and 121 other ranks were in excess of the normal company establishment. (Actually six officers sailed, including a Captain Lascalles, an Imperial officer attached to

\* Vide Appendices J to J4 for details of organisation, rates of pay, uniforms and equipment.

\*\* Vide Chapter VII.

the contingent).

Mobilisation took place in three stages, war probable, war imminent and war declared. During the war probable stage the initial political debate, of whether troops were to be sent or not, had to be settled. The government's motion for sending the contingent was opposed, in the lower house, by ten votes out of 28, and in the upper house the motion was only carried by the casting vote of the president (6). The war imminent stage overlapped the war probable stage to some extent, because volunteering had begun before parliament had decided to send troops. During the second stage military stores were assembled and the Lobethal spinning mills went onto two shifts to complete a military order for 400 yards of cloth (7). War declared meant actual mobilisation.

On Friday 13th October, 1899 the selection of volunteers began. It was based on their military shooting ability - only first class shots were considered - and on physical condition. Medical examinations began three days later. A score of civilians also volunteered. There was even 'one individual forcing his way into the ranks full of patriotism and beer. He was promptly rejected on the ground that he was not bullet proof' (8). After medical selection, the men were interviewed by the commandant, Colonel Stuart. Most married men were rejected, among them those who just wanted 'to get away from mum and the kids' (9), and those who borrowed uniforms to impress the selectors. The men went into a camp at the Exhibition Grounds, where training began almost immediately, but weeding continued, so that by the time the contingent sailed the commandant had raised as good a company as any one could have expected. No information is available describing the

type of training undergone by the troops, but it is important to note that within 20 days a company was raised, freshly attested, equipped, organised, allotted transport (two wagons and a watercart), issued with 12 mules, and embarked (10).

The other colonies mobilised equally quickly, which speaks highly of the administrative capability of the Australian forces as a whole. Military planners had not worked in isolation; the federal defence thinking of senior officers since the eighties had borne fruit. They had been in consultation with each other and the rapidity with which the mobilisation plans were put into operation shows that the military planners, in South Australia at least, were more competent than their predecessors had been in 1885. Admittedly, the task in 1899 was easier. There were no civil defence aspects to consider and no involvement of the whole population. On the other hand, a new set of legal circumstances and the question of repatriation had to be faced. Problems were raised by differences in pay levels for Australian and the English soldiers, and for the first time in Australian history nurses were enrolled.

The attestation (conditions of service) which every soldier was asked to sign, was headed South Australian Volunteer Contingent for South Africa - Army Act 44 and 45, Victoria, Cap 58 - The Defences Act, 1895. Under the Defences Act, 1895 Sec 19, officers and soldiers were 'liable to serve in any part of Australia, or Tasmania, but not elsewhere'. However, Section 36 of the Defences Act stated that once a soldier had been attested, he was subject to the provisions of the Army Act 'as if he had been duly enlisted and attested for Her Majesty's Army for general service, and as if the Force formed part of Her Majesty's Army ... so far as the same are not inconsistent with this Act' (11). Attestation was, therefore, essential,

since neither the colonial nor the Imperial acts met the conditions of the situation (12).

Section 177 of the Army Act allowed for its application within the territorial limits of a colony or in the instance of a colonial force serving with Her Majesty's forces, where the colonial administration had made no provisions for discipline. Doubts had arisen concerning the degree to which the Army Act was binding. The Boer War force had not been raised for service within territorial limits, and the colonial administration had made provisions to discipline the colonial force once it was serving with Her Majesty's forces. However, until the force arrived in Africa, it was both outside territorial limits, and at the same time not serving with Her Majesty's forces. As a result, the legal gap could only be bridged if the volunteers agreed to 'bind themselves from 17th October 1899 and until discharged ... to be the subject of the provisions of the Army Act' (2). It must be noted that since the above attestation implied enlistment for the duration of hostilities, and not for a set period, it lay outside the provisions of the Defences Act, 1895, and therefore should have been subject to a new regulation under the Act, which in turn would have required the approval of both Houses, under Section 38 of the Act. There is no record that such a regulation was passed, and one cannot help but gain the impression that the whole procedure was probably constitutionally illegal. But buried in an avalanche of enthusiasm for the Empire, by that time inseparable from the colonists' concern for the security of hearth and home, the legality of the attestation was generally ignored, even by the legislators.

The latter were far more concerned with the repatriation aspects of South Australia's first war. Not previously en-

countered in British military history, repatriation also involved insurance and medical care, as well as preferential civilian employment of the enlistees. The troops were insured for £250 on death or total disability, and £125 for partial disability, against premiums ranging from £15 for the first year of service, to £5 for the second year, and £6.5.0 for the third and successive years. Apparently, the risk of getting killed in action increased with service. The contract awarded to the Citizen Life Insurance Company shows that its first contingent cost the South Australian Government £1,270 (13).

The principle of preferential employment of returned soldiers was an innovation, in keeping with South Australia's reputation as a social laboratory. The government, in reply to a submission by the Reverend J.C. Kirby of Semaphore, did not consider preferential employment to be a right - this would have required appropriate legislation - but rather established the principle that early consideration be given to the employing of returned servicemen in the government service (14). Upon return, every man was medically examined. If declared fit, he was given one month's pay upon immediate discharge, otherwise leave on full pay and first class railway passes until medically discharged (14). Soldiers undergoing medical treatment were attached, for administrative purposes, to the permanent force (15). Invalids, of which the first contingent had a fair share, were looked after by philanthropists, as far as comforts were concerned, and a group of Adelaide ladies prepared for all servicemen so called comfort kits, containing a flannel shirt, pyjamas, slippers, 2 pairs of socks, 2 handkerchiefs, soap, towel, toothbrush and sponge.

The return of the first contingent was anticipated with some trepidation. General Roberts had advised Sydney that the men should 'not be treated to alcoholic stimulants in public houses' (16): apparently there had been unpleasant scenes elsewhere because morale was not particularly high.

In Africa, the Australian contingent had had a rough time. As one soldier wrote home,

the whole system is rotten, half the time we were without horses and the other we had only Argentine horses, badly broken in; food not too good, often it was a question of loot, loot, loot ... (17),

Not surprisingly, there was a near-mutiny when the first contingent reached Albany and Colonel Tom Price refused to let the troops ashore, although it was generally known that he himself attended an official luncheon in honour of their return (18).

Mention should be made here of the first South Australian women to go overseas in defence of the Empire. It was a strange arrangement. Although the nurses, referred to in cypher as 'clot birds' (19), were not part of the South Australian contingents, being sponsored purely by private subscription and not by the government (20), their conditions of service were embodied in a collective agreement, which acknowledged one of them, Sister M.S. Bidmead, as officer commanding and acknowledged the authority of the British medical service on arrival in South Africa (21). The agreement was to be in force for six months or for two months after cessation of hostilities, whichever was the sooner. If a nurse refused to return after six months, or left the service during that time, she forfeited her return passage and every nurse had to inform the chief-secretary of her whereabouts by the first day of each month (22). Thus despite the private nature of the nurses contingent, the government maintained some control.

In September 1899, within a fortnight of the Imperial government's acceptance of the proffered nursing contingent, nearly thirty applications were received (23). All unsuccessful applicants received beautifully worded letters of appreciation from the government, while the six nurses who were selected sailed for South Africa on the Australasian in January 1900. In a subsequently published letter Sister Bidmead sought to discourage the dispatch of further nurses - there had been an avalanche of applications after the news of raising the fourth contingent had become public (24) - because there were too many nurses in Africa already. Her surprise at the fact that the nurses were assigned military rank (25) implied that the medical corps in South Australia had not kept up to date.

The cost of equipping and transporting one nurse to and from South Africa, and paying her a salary of 15/- per week, was estimated at £100.\* This meant that the total cost of sending six nurses to South Africa was between £630 and £635 (26). By 30th June, 1900, about £1,285 had been received in donations to the Nurses Fund and the balance stood at £880 (27). After the fund was finally wound up the credit balance was transferred to the Bushmen's Corps (28), a private army raised for Empire defence.

\* This total included the following items

Return passage	£62. 0. 0
Uniform	18. 0. 0
Insurance	4. 0. 0
Emergency items	3. 0. 0
Salary**	<u>18.10. 0</u>
	<u>£105.10. 0</u> (26)

\*\* The nurses drew only £2 per month; the remainder was credited to their accounts as deferred pay.

The idea of forming a Mounted Bushmen's Corps apparently originated in London, where resident Australians decided to raise the necessary funds by private or, if necessary, public subscription (29). As a result £10,000 became available for distribution among the colonies (30). Sydney residents also embraced the scheme and 'in order that the movement might assume a Federal character', South Australia was asked to cooperate (31). Within a fortnight the lord-mayor of Adelaide had convened a meeting of leading citizens at which £1,575, of the estimated £5,000 necessary to put 100 all ranks into the field, were promised. An executive committee was also formed and charged with the responsibility of selecting both personnel and horses. Some 40 horses were presented as a gift. The government, having already put two contingents into the field, did not feel justified in subsidising the movement directly, but offered considerable indirect assistance (32) in the form of free postage and stationery, and railway transport for men, horses and any gifts of produce assigned to the corps. The government also undertook to train the troops and to look after pay arrangements (33).

Officers were not appointed until just before the corps sailed for South Africa. Subalterns were taken from the ranks of sergeants serving in the South Australian army. Since the officer commanding was to be a captain, none of the serving officers of superior rank could be considered. Meanwhile none of the serving captains, nor subalterns for that matter, fulfilled the pre-requisite of being genuine bushmen. Consequently a civilian had to be chosen, one S.G. Hubbe, who was later killed at Ottoshoop (34) (35). The contingent which on 7th March 1900 embarked on the Maplemore consisted of four



regimental and two non-combatant officers, eleven non-commissioned officers, 83 other ranks, 120 horses and two transport waggons, but no weapons. These were to be issued in Africa, from the Imperial ordnance depots.

Several features of the Bushmen's Corps seem worthy of comment. Firstly, the majority of its members were over 25 years of age, the explanation being that men over 25 were supposed to be in better physical condition and more mature, and thus better fitted to carry out the task of the corps. This is difficult to accept, because patrol work in particular makes very heavy demands on the physical stamina of a man and a person under 25 years would, surely, have been preferable for this reason.

It must also be remembered that this corps, setting forth to defend the Empire, was a private enterprise. A comparison with the first contingent, where most of the recruits came from the working class (36), seems to lend support to the view that the formation of the corps was undertaken as the rich man's contribution to Empire defence. Perhaps it was a reaction against periodic accusations by the radicals that wealthy colonists, in particular the well-to-do rural middle class, sought to stay aloof from the defence effort. That the members were more able, financially, to go-a-soldiering might be deduced from their willingness to accept less pay than was received by the other contingents.\*

However, public acclaim for the Bushmen's Corps was more likely to be due to other factors. In the first instance, there was a general enthusiasm for the Empire at

\* Vide Appendix J 2.

that time, fanned by such people as Rudyard Kipling. The Observer when comparing Robert Buchan with Kipling, described the public appeal of the latter in the following words:

Mr. Kipling causes his readers to see and feel, he expresses kind ideas in strong vigorous diction. He places his finger on the pulse of the public and records the heart-beat of a nation. (37)

The reverses suffered by the British troops in Africa at that time accelerated the heart-beat of the nation. The pyrrhic victory at Caesar's Camp on 6th January, where the British casualties were almost twice those of the Boers (38), and the loss of 1,200 British at Spion Kop, where '... with an unerring instinct the British were tackling the most formidable hill in the whole line of the Tugela heights' (39), had come shortly after Black Week in December 1899.\* In South Australia, as elsewhere, people seemed to react in a manner similar to that experienced in 1940 after the fall of France - of the bonds of Empire loyalty (40) and of defeat patriotism was born (41).

But perhaps the most important factor in the raising of the Bushmen's Corps was its being regarded as a people's corps, manned by volunteers motivated by 'warm patriotism' (42), and raised by public subscription, not by the government. Then, as now, the latter was not really regarded as being 'of the people'. The press rather scathingly silenced those who belittled the idea proposed by a patriotic South Australian, J.C.F. Johnson, that a gentlemen's corps should be raised from the well-to-do members of the community who would pay for their own equipment and passage to South Africa (43). After comparisons with Colonel Roosevelt's Rough Riders, who were either millionaires or sons of millionaires, the press thought it

\* Modder River, 28th November, Stormburg Junction, 9th December, Magersfontein, 10th December, Colense, 12th December.

right and proper that people living on unearned incomes should enrol themselves in a special force. 'Don't let us call it the Gentlemen's Corps, don't let us have any cheap smears about. Let us rather wish success to the Australian Self-supporting Rough Riders'<sup>\*</sup> (44). Although that force was never formed, South Australians came to regard the Bushmen's Corps in the same way. It was their own personal contribution, raised, equipped and dispatched by their own efforts; in other words, an expression of the self-supporting principle.

Prior to federation, South Australia was to dispatch to South Africa one more contingent, the fourth, diametrically opposite in concept to that of the Bushmen's Corps. It was a mercenary unit, raised on behalf of the British Government, which undertook to defray the pay and other expenses (45).

Imperial pay at the Cape Colony and in Natal was s 1/2 per man per day, and was only raised to <sup>s 5/-</sup> / - during active service. The term of enlistment for the fourth contingent was 12 months or 'for the duration', whichever was the longer. The British Government soon realised the pay was too low and asked the colonies whether they had promised the troops any other emoluments. Queensland had already undertaken to make up the pay to the level of the previous contingents, New South Wales was considering doing the same, but Victoria declined, as did South Australia, asking instead that full service pay be given from the day of departure. Eventually, a compromise solution was found: the pay was to be higher than normal Imperial pay, but less than the pay awarded to the first two contingents.

The fourth contingent was raised on the population quota formula, which at that time was one soldier for every

\* Author's Italics

1858 heads of population, thus -

New South Wales,	with 1,348,400	people,	was to furnish	725	men
Victoria	" 1,162,900	"	" " "	625	men
Queensland	" 482,400	"	" " "	260	men
South Australia	" 370,700	"	" " "	200	men
Tasmania	" 182,300	"	" " "	95	men
Western Australia	" 171,000	"	" " "	95	men
				<u>2,000</u>	<u>men</u>

The organisation of this force (121 all ranks per company) was based on the Royal Warrant of 24th December 1899, the authority for the formation of a Corps of Imperial Yeomanry. Consequently, New South Wales furnished six companies, Victoria five, Queensland and South Australia, two each, with Tasmania and Western Australia together, one. It was a brigade organisation of four battalions with four companies each. Thus, of two battalions, New South Wales and Queensland contributed one and a half and half a battalion respectively. Victoria furnished one battalion, while its fifth company, together with the two companies from South Australia, and the combined Tasmania/Western Australia company formed the last battalion (46). Battalion staffs were furnished by the colony which supplied the major portion of the troops. Thus a South Australian officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Rowell, was given command of the fourth battalion of the Brigade, eventually to be known as the Imperial Bushmen's Corps.

As a brigade exercise, the dispatch of the fourth contingent did not proceed as smoothly as had those of the previous smaller, and almost independent, contingents. There was confusion regarding the funds the contingent was to take with it and regarding the scale of forage issue, and no thought had been given to remittance arrangements (47). The absence

of federal control and co-ordination was making itself felt.

It was not only men that the South Australian military had to mobilise. For the second and subsequent contingents, horses had to be selected also. Contrary to British practice, where the colonels personally selected the horses (48), the government appointed a Remount Committee. By May, 1900, the Committee had selected 196 troop horses and 16 transport horses, averaging £13.13.7 and £26.0.0 respectively (49). As had happened on previous occasions, the business community was not slow to try to sell to the government anything from rifles and tea canteens, to jam and canned meat (50-54).

Thus, in a matter of six months South Australia had contributed some 560 men and 450 horses for active service in South Africa and had incurred an expenditure, both fiscal and public, of some £30,000, of which transport was the major item.\* There is no point in comparing this effort with those of 1914 and 1939, because the concept of total war was not recognised at the turn of the century. It is merely suggested that the rapidity with which the contingents were raised, equipped and dispatched spoke well of an army organisation which was obviously prepared for Imperial war.

\* The cost to the government (55) of shipping the second contingent was about £4,820, made up as follows -

8 officers at £25 each	£ 200. 0. 0
110 other ranks at £14.2.0 each	1,552. 0. 0
142 Horses at £12.10.0 each	1,725. 0. 0
19,363 cubic feet cargo space at s 50/-per 40 cubic feet	1,210. 3. 9
Extra accommodation	70. 8. 6
Loading expenses for horses	11. 1. 0
	<hr/>
	£6,768.13. 3

The 'Protector' for China

Very little federal significance can be attributed to the China expedition of H.M.C.S. Protector. The only non-South Australian component of the venture was the captain (56), and while the contingents sent by the Colony to South Africa were truly the Federal Army on the march, the expedition of the Protector was an expression of a colony's own Empire consciousness, expressed in a non-federal context.

The circumstances which brought about British intervention in China during the Boxer uprising do not concern us here. On 22nd June 1900 England requested naval assistance from the Australia Station. South Australia, together with the other colonies, agreed to grant the request (57), and promptly offered the services of the Protector, '... manned or otherwise, as convenient, at cost to Imperial Government' (58). Here was a chance to prove that the South Australian naval defences were good, in fact, better than those of the other colonies, who could only offer naval brigades.\* When the Admiralty accepted the offer, the Advertiser was strongly in favour of the venture. The Register hesitated at first, but within a few days both the Register and the Observer were to carry headlines: 'Hands across the sea - the Protector bound for China' (59). The legislature, whilst approving the expedition, objected strongly to any suggestion of sending troops (60).\*

\* The naval brigades from New South Wales and Victoria were small contingents, of about 50 men each. They sailed on the Salamis on 7th August, 1900, amid strong opposition from the New South Wales press, which referred to them as 'horse marines' and a useless contribution (61). Nevertheless, the 'horse marines' acquitted themselves very well. Originally ear-marked for the storming of the Taku forts (62), for which they would have been too late anyway, because the forts were taken in June, they were diverted to the port of Tientsin to act as a police force (63).

But while South Australia seemed to want to co-operate in Empire defence, and was prepared to demonstrate that she was capable of doing so, Great Britain exhibited a strange reluctance to accept this co-operation. The Protector was ready to sail in the middle of July 1900, yet her departure was delayed for nearly a month. It appears that the ship was offered on 2nd July, the offer was accepted on the 5th, and provisioning arrangements and rates of pay were advised to London on the 7th. On 12th July a rather anxious telegram requested London to advise whether pay arrangements were acceptable. On 16th a further telegram expressed South Australia's annoyance at British tardiness to reply, and on 28th July the Admiralty declined to take the Protector. Promptly, the Colony voiced its indignation (64). The Advertiser said

... that the annoyance inseparable from long procrastination should have been followed by what has very much the aspect of a humiliating snub, is indeed hard to bear. (65)

Under pressure from the Colonial Office, the Admiralty weakened, and the final acceptance was received in Adelaide on 3rd August. Two days later the Protector sailed for China (66).

It would seem that the bone of contention had been the need to subsidise Imperial pay rates of s1/9 per day to bring them in to line with the colonial rates of s6/- and s5/- for able seamen, s5/- and s4/- for 2nd class seamen, and s4/- and s3/- for ordinary seamen, ashore and afloat respectively. In his telegram of 12th July, the governor advised London, that unless assurances regarding pay were received within a week, the members of the naval reserve would withdraw and other men would have to be recruited. The Admiralty could not accept this, because it would have meant that comparatively untrained crews would have been on the same footing as Royal Navy personnel. It was suggested that South Australia could defray

the difference between Imperial and colonial pays, just as New South Wales and Victoria had done in the case of their naval brigades, but the South Australian Government, at that time facing a no-confidence motion, could not possibly have acceded to the Admiralty suggestion for fear of political consequences.

It was the Colonial Office which put matters right. South Australia had offered the use of a colonial gun boat, 'manned as convenient', the cost to be borne by Imperial authorities. In accordance with Section 6 of the Colonial Naval Defence Act 1865, the Colony was entitled to a subsidy for wear and tear. The Admiralty agreed, and so did the South Australian Government, that £500 per month would be acceptable. The crafty Kingston must have calculated that the £500 was just about equal to the pay difference. As for the wear and tear, Kingston doubtless realised that the Protector was to be taken over by the Commonwealth within six months, so, no extra expense to the Colony later on, anyway.

At the request of the Colonial Office, some of the relevant telegrams and correspondence (67) were not published, resulting in a less accrimonious debate than might have been expected, and offering an opportunity to advance some other reasons for the Admiralty's reluctance to accept the Protector. Downes suggested that Britain was perhaps reluctant to deprive the Colony of the Protector in case of 'European complications' - a view which was ridiculed (68). Apart from purely administrative difficulties, there was the possibility that the Admiralty was simply reluctant to become involved in colonial co-operation, especially in a minor conflict, having made its scepticism towards colonial participation in Empire naval



defence evident some years earlier, when the Naval Agreement was being renewed.

Meanwhile, the Protector sailed from Adelaide, with stores worth £2,000 and 400 new uniforms (69). The Y.M.C.A. had organised a shipboard library and a firm of solicitors had drawn up wills for the ship's company (70). Having had to take on more stores in Sydney (71), the Protector proceeded to Townsville, where Captain Creswell took command, since the South Australian naval commandant, Flag-Lieutenant Clare, had not served with the Royal Navy and would not, therefore, under the terms of the Colonial Naval Defence Act 1865, have been acceptable. Creswell had been magnanimously lent by a sister colony (Queensland) 'as practical proof of Australian unity although at much inconvenience to [their] marine force' (72).

The Protector reached Hong Kong, where on 10th September she hoisted the White Ensign to begin her short career as H.M.S. Protector (73). By the middle of November, having carried out patrol and survey activities off the China coast, she was de-commissioned as a Royal Navy ship and returned to Australia in time to attend the Commonwealth celebrations in Sydney on 1st January, 1901. She was expected to return to Adelaide on 6th January (74).

At first glance it would seem that the ship had been ready to sail within ten days of the decision to offer her services, and, thus, that the South Australian navy was ready for action. However, judging from the money spent outside the Colony for additional ships' stores (£1,221) (75), one suspects that the ship may not have been ready for action if forced to rely exclusively on South Australian resources. Similarly, on arrival at the China Station, the Protector deposited some

of her stores and took on Royal Navy stores, which may have been done to facilitate stores accounting for colonial and Imperial service, or it may have been due to the unsuitability of the original ships stores for active service.

Nevertheless, South Australians felt that they had done their best, for home and Empire in China as they had done in South Africa. A seven column feature in the Observer (76) spoke of stirring times and Empire loyalty. Glynn's prophecy, that 'the colonies were like fruit, they will drop off when ripe' (77) had not come true. Citizen soldiers and sailors had gone overseas to defend the Empire as they were to do again in thousands two decades later.

CHAPTER XITHE END OF AN ERA 1901

Whereas by section 69 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act it is provided that ... the following Departments of the Public Service of each State shall become transferred to the Commonwealth ... I do hereby proclaim that on the first day of March, One Thousand Nine Hundred and One, the Departments of Naval and Military Defence in each State shall become transferred to the Commonwealth.

Proclamation, No. 2, 1901 (1)

Two factors ... may be considered as governing the future organisation and administration of the Military Forces of the Commonwealth, namely -

- (a) the defence of Australian soil,
- (b) the defence of Australian interests wherever they may be threatened.

Major General Sir Edward  
Hutton, 1902 (2)

... Whatever we expect the Empire to render to us in our time of need, we shall be ready to render to her as a matter of common fairness.

E. Barton, January, 1901 (3)

The ... South Australian Defence Act was passed in 1895. This latter Act appears on the whole to be that which best deserves to be followed.

Colonial Defence Committee  
Memorandum, 1901. (4)

### 11.1 The First Commonwealth of Australia Defence Bills, 1901

The Commonwealth of Australia defence forces assumed a statutory national identity when the first Commonwealth of Australia Defence Act came into force on 1st March, 1904, and in slow stages the colonial forces raised by South Australia were absorbed into the Commonwealth defence organisation.

The concept of the Commonwealth defence forces had developed as the result of a movement towards national co-operation in defence, which had become apparent from the middle seventies onwards, and which had gathered momentum in the nineties. At the inter-colonial conferences in 1894, 1898, 1899 and 1901, the senior military officers, supported by their respective governments, formulated defence schemes for the colonies. Cautiously they moved towards a federal defence structure, paving the way for Australian participation in Empire defence. The Intercolonial Military Committee of 1896 recommended, for instance, that the territorial limits, stipulated in the 1894 Defence Scheme, be lifted (5). This promised an advance on the already quite extensive areas of possible employment of colonial troops; military planners foresaw the possibility of Australian troops being employed in the Dutch East Indies, north of New Guinea, in most of the German and French island areas, and, naturally, in New Zealand. The proposed lifting of territorial limits would have opened the way for Australian expeditionary forces to operate anywhere in the world. In this political climate the military planners of the new Commonwealth envisaged their defence forces playing an integral part, not only defensively but, if needs be, offensively, in Imperial security. At the same time plans for integrating the defence forces of the colonies were formulated

on the assumption that the citizen soldiers of the new Commonwealth army would be uniformly trained and organised on militia principles. It so happened that the assumption did not materialise.

The political planners did not keep pace with the military visionaries. Initially, while soldiers were faced with the problem of co-ordinating five or six defence organisations which had achieved a fair degree of technical compatibility, politicians sought some measure of legislative uniformity. The resulting bills which eventually led to the Commonwealth of Australia Defence Act, 1904, stemmed from a number of concepts which had developed in the colonies during the 19th century and which were influenced by external factors emanating mainly from England in the context of her Imperial defence policy. At the same time they had to ignore, or even repudiate, some of the legislative measures which had slowly and almost painfully emerged in the colonies to satisfy their own conditions and aspirations. So much so, that it is now quite difficult, if not impossible, to trace any one Commonwealth provision exclusively to a particular colonial defence act. Some contrasts can, nevertheless, be discerned between the South Australian defence legislation and the early Commonwealth defence bills, particularly, the first Commonwealth Defence Bill.

In some respects, South Australian defence legislation of 1895 was more advanced than the first Commonwealth bill. The South Australian command structure was more clearly defined in that ultimate responsibility for the force rested with a military officer (South Australian Defences Act Clause 6), while the Commonwealth bill did not place final responsibility for the force, ipso facto, in the hands of a

military officer, but vested overall command in the Governor General, and provided, almost as an after-thought, for the appointment of a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief for the Commonwealth forces. Also, the South Australian defence force was not subject to parliamentary interference, since this was not thought to be conducive to military efficiency. The Commonwealth Parliament, on the other hand, was given power to intervene, (clauses 7 (1) and 8 (3) of the first Commonwealth bill).

South Australia's force consisted of a permanent component, an active force, and a reserve force (South Australian Defence Act, Clause 7). There was no distinction between militia (paid) and volunteers (unpaid); all members were termed soldiers (Clause 8). In other words, South Australia had made no provision for a volunteer force, in the sense indicated by Clause 35 of the first Commonwealth bill. By the time the Commonwealth defence arrangements were implemented their original features had altered considerably. The planned militia did not eventuate because the Commonwealth Parliament had become increasingly hostile to the idea. During the period of integration the partially paid South Australian units were given volunteer (unpaid) status. The result was deterioration in morale and recruitment.

The period of service in South Australia was two years in the active force, followed by compulsory transfer for a further five years' service in the reserve force (South Australian <sup>Defence</sup> Act Clause 23). The Commonwealth bill provided for an active force, consisting of a permanent component and a citizen soldier component, divided into paid militia and unpaid volunteers (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clauses 10, 11).

The period of service in the active force was three years, after which service in the reserve force was acceptable, but not, as in South Australia, compulsory (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clause 20).

The principle of compulsory service, almost sacred to the radicals of South Australia, was considerably diluted in the first Commonwealth Defence Bill, 1901. In South Australia, military service, except for the permanent force, was compulsory for three categories of men, between the ages of 18 and 45 (South Australian Defence Act, Clause 12) based on a ballot system (Clause 17) and compulsion was to be enforced only in cases of danger (Clause 11). The spirit of the Commonwealth bill, on the other hand, relied on basically voluntary enlistment with compulsion to be resorted to only in case of emergency (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clause 4). Even the rifle clubs (the one concession Charles Cameron Kingston had to make to the champions of the volunteer movement) were under fairly strict military supervision at all times and could be incorporated into the active forces by proclamation in South Australia. Under the Commonwealth legislation this was not possible except in a national emergency.

Thus the important difference between the early Commonwealth and South Australian ideas on defence lay in South Australia's belief that military service was an obligation every citizen should be prepared to accept. The Commonwealth, on the other hand, considered the universal service legislation, which had been on the statute books of South Australia since 1854, as unnecessary or, at most, a vis-in-terrorem should citizens fail to come forward voluntarily.

In other respects the first Commonwealth Defence Bill, 1901 was more advanced than the 1895 South Australian

legislation. For instance, the former, obliquely, provided for active participation by Australian forces in Empire defence, whereas the territorial limitations of service stipulated in South Australia would not have allowed any part of her military force to serve outside the Australian continent and Tasmania (South Australian Defences Act, Clause 19). The Commonwealth did not place any restrictions on the employment of the permanent force (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clauses 34 (2)). However, citizen force members could not be compelled to serve outside the territorial limits of the Commonwealth, except where the defence of the Commonwealth was at stake (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clause 34 (3)). They did have the right, nevertheless, to volunteer for such service (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clause 94). Thus the first Commonwealth Defence Bill contained provisions which would have made it comparatively easy to raise a force for Empire defence, as well as for defending Australia's interests beyond the territorial limits of the Commonwealth.

More importantly, perhaps, the Commonwealth Parliament came to attack the idea of service beyond the continental limits. This idea had never been generally accepted in South Australia, where ideas of neutrality were not yet dead and where the concept of dual loyalty had not developed to the stage it had reached in some of the other colonies. The concept of forward defence was soon eliminated by the Minister for Defence, Sir John Forrest, who restricted service to Australian territorial limits. Eventually, only a separate volunteer force could serve overseas to defend the Empire.

Within a short space of time many of the features distinctive of South Australian defence were lost in the



Commonwealth defence legislation and resultant defence schemes. Thus the South Australian contribution was meagre. Only the provisions dealing with the Australian Rifle Association (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clauses 89-91) and the one concerned with the protection of mining claims (Commonwealth Defence Bill, Clause 95) are uniquely attributable to the 1895 South Australian Defences Act (Clauses 92, 93 and 54).

Even if South Australia's experience had little influence on Commonwealth defence arrangements, South Australians could look back with some pride on having achieved a workable compromise between aspirations, needs and low expenditures for defence schemes which had exercised the minds of the Adelphi planners seventy years before.

Early in the history of the Colony defence meant primarily the maintenance of law and order; it was not until the middle of the century that defence was seen in the context of possible attacks on South Australian shores by non-British powers. South Australia had been founded by Englishmen who hoped, therefore, to defray the cost of defending their new home by implementing the self-supporting principle. This meant the raising of a colonial militia, not unlike those of the early chartered companies in the American colonies. Their hopes thwarted by the British Government, the colonists had to look to alternative means of defending their Paradise of Dissent.

Governor Gawler's attempts in 1840 to form a volunteer militia proved fruitless. The colonists did not support the idea, while his successor, Governor Grey, practically rejected the concept outright, preferring to rely for law and order on detachments of British regulars, rather than on the self-supporting principle.

The arrival of a British garrison in 1841 had ushered in an era of almost total reliance on Great Britain. The garrison system in South Australia had three distinct purposes. Locally, garrison troops had the task of aiding civil authorities in maintaining law and order. Nationally, they had a military role. In neither of these roles did the British regulars

particularly distinguish themselves. Civil disturbances occasionally requiring the services of Imperial troops were usually caused by natives, who invariably eluded their heavily equipped and unsuitably trained pursuers. The purely military duties of the garrison, namely, protection of the Colony against hostile acts by non-British powers, and the training of locally raised military forces, proved to be even less arduous. The role played by Imperial troops in the history of the Colony was mainly constitutional. The presence of the garrison was the outward emblem of Colonial Office rule, exercised through the governor. Besides, the existence of a garrison in company strength made it possible for the senior military officer to act as lieutenant-governor, because, for a time, the Colonial Office did not consider the chief justice of the Colony, normally the lieutenant-governor elect, as being suitable to represent Her Majesty should the need arise.

The colonists, on the other hand, saw no virtue in the presence of Imperial troops in their midst. They realised that the value of the garrison's police and military duties was, at best, marginal, and they did not understand, nor were they aware of, the constitutional role the British troops were meant to play. In addition, there was so much about the general administration and social character of the Imperial troops to irritate South Australians that the British garrisons met with indifference, if not outright hostility, in the Paradise of Dissent, and when the era of military dependence on the Mother Country came to an end, few South Australians mourned its passing.

Britain's military disengagement from her colonies in 1870, a process which had taken some twenty years, actually strengthened Imperial ties instead of weakening them. The Crimean war, subsequent expansionist activities of non-British

powers in the Pacific, and the possibility of British involvement in war with these powers, forced the colonists to appreciate the nature of potential threats to their safety, to develop means of countering them and, finally, to evolve a system of defence co-operation with Britain to make the Empire safe.

The basic premise in all defence considerations had always been that the Royal Navy would protect the sea lanes and Imperial communications, while the second, third and fourth lines of defence, that is, protection of the sea approaches to the continent, safe-guarding of the littoral districts, and repulsion of possible enemy landings, was a colonial responsibility. Because of the assumed omnipotence and ubiquity of the Royal Navy, large scale enemy landings were thought impossible, but small scale enemy raids and bombardments of Adelaide were considered feasible, since Royal Navy strength around Australia could not be equally effective everywhere at the same time. The Colony's defence efforts culminated in the establishment of a naval force to intercept hostile warships at the entrance to the South Australian gulfs, in the erection of fixed defences to protect the approaches to Adelaide, and in raising mobile forces to repulse enemy troops which might have succeeded in landing under cover of darkness, or out of range of the coastal guns.

With the purchase of H.M.C.S. Protector, South Australia achieved the aim of safe-guarding her second line of defence. The ship was one of the most efficient men-of-war afloat in the middle eighties. She was well officered and had a well trained crew, and would have no doubt given a good account of herself in battle. As for the third line of defence, the forts erected at Glanville and Largs would also have been

effective weapon systems in the eighties: their basic armament was of the latest design and reports of firing exercises indicated a high standard of training.

Naval ordnance improved in the early nineties, gradually rendering the forts obsolescent. The emphasis in the defence effort shifted, from bricks and mortar to men and horses. The wheel of strategic thinking had turned full circle. What had begun with basically mobile defences came back to the same concept. The amateur soldiers of 1854 had been replaced in the eighties by professional military technocrats, who were essential to the design and maintenance of fixed defences, and who later had to accept the gradual ascendancy of amateur citizen soldiers.

In the years between first settlement and federation, South Australia had three alternatives for raising and maintaining a mobile military defence force. Firstly, the Colony could either rely on universal militia-type training, or on paid, voluntarily enlisted personnel or on unpaid volunteers. Alternatively, a full time, short service force could be enlisted, either voluntarily or compulsorily. Finally, there was always the possibility of having a standing army, composed of regular (professional) soldiers. The factors controlling the choice were political, as well as economic and administrative. In the early years, up to the middle sixties, it was the self-supporting principle, coupled with the notion that a citizen was obliged to serve, which made the introduction of universal service militia legislation palatable to people opposed to compulsion of any kind. However, in practice, militia training found popularity only among the more radical elements of the Colony.

From the middle sixties to the early eighties, as the Colony developed into a commercial and agricultural society, her ties with England grew stronger. England's precedent influenced the colonists towards a voluntary concept of defence, leaving South Australia's defence planners to cope with the vagaries of human nature: during an emergency, real or imagined, the people of South Australia flocked to the Colours with little prospect of being trained properly; when the emergency disappeared, so did interest and enthusiasm for training. The problem was how to maintain a defence organisation which could ensure that enough suitably trained personnel would always be available to meet defence emergencies. Towards the end of the century, when the Colony had acquired a number of permanent defence installations, and when soldiering began to imply more than the mere ability to shoot straight, the necessity for a small professional force became obvious and was generally accepted.

South Australians eventually solved the problem by evolving their own particular citizen soldiery, which combined compulsory, militia-type, universal training, intended partly as a political credo and partly as a vis in terrorem, with voluntary service, the de facto form of training. The voluntary force was meant to complement the small regular force, raised to maintain capital equipment in instant readiness and to provide administrative support for the citizen army. The universal service concept was generally wholeheartedly supported by South Australian radicals who tended to regard unpaid volunteers with a degree of class suspicion. Yet, there were some fears and misgivings concerning universal service, for a compulsorily enlisted force might, when called out to aid civil authorities, have been used as a weapon against the working class. The Queensland legislation (6) had made provisions allowing such

abuse of universal service and might have served as the grounds for the escape clause in the South Australian act, limiting compulsory enlistment to times of proclaimed danger of invasion. By the mid nineties South Australia's army was organised into a permanent voluntarily enlisted force, an active force, and a compulsory reserve force, manned by voluntarily enlisted citizens. The old terms of regulars, militia men, volunteers and the like had disappeared: all members of the forces were now called soldiers.

The planning and implementations of South Australia's defence effort was influenced by moves towards both national and Imperial co-operation. The former had to await the growth of national consciousness, brought about through improved continental communications, through an awareness of possible threats to the colonies, and the realisation that a national effort was required to make the approaches to the continent safe. National co-operation in defence manifested itself in conferences of the senior military officers, who successfully developed standardised systems for training, equipment and organisation, systems which formed the basis of the subsequent Commonwealth defence structure but made little impact on South Australia prior to 1895. The most tangible signs of early national co-operation were the federal forts at King George Sound and Thursday Island. South Australian readiness to co-operate in the erection and maintenance of the federal forts was hampered by parochial attitudes, including the desire to gain economic advantages from developing Darwin and Port Lincoln into federal defence installations.

Hand in hand with growing national co-operation went the tendency towards co-operation with England, with military and naval defence of the Empire developing along almost parallel, if ill-defined lines. Until late in the century, these developments lacked a clear policy and agreed concepts. Prior to the

Australian Naval Agreement, 1887, measures taken to put such co-operation into practice were of an ad hoc nature. There was a number of reasons. Politically, the climate was not conducive to co-operation, at least till after Majuba Hill in 1881. The tendency towards dissociation from Britain, particularly after attaining self-government was enhanced by the withdrawal of British troops in 1870. A strong desire to remain neutral in the event of war made military co-operation difficult, if not impossible. The colonies also felt that England was more interested in consolidating her possessions than in advancing the frontiers of the Empire. This consolidation hardly called for participation on the part of the colonies. As for British encouragement of colonial self-reliance, it was interpreted as the rejection of colonial co-operation in Empire defence.

Geographical isolation and poor communications during the first part of the century rendered a political Empire consciousness somewhat unreal, while the dissenters in South Australia, with their anti-English attitude and their pre-occupation with establishing themselves in a new land, tended even more towards isolationism. The occasional appearance of the White Ensign convinced the colonists of their own safety, but any interest in Empire security was sentimental and spasmodic.

From the 1880s, a gradual change of attitude towards Empire defence began to emerge, first in England, and eventually in the Australian colonies. Recurring international crises in Europe began to convince the colonists that British supremacy, and thus their own interests, were at stake. The intrusion of foreign powers into the Pacific created the feeling that closer Empire ties were certainly desirable, provided that England paid the bills for such co-operation. Advice offered by the Colonial



Defence Committee, not necessarily asked for, but generally accepted, gave the colonies to understand that England herself had become interested in their safety. The influence of Jervois, Scratchley and Edwards seems to have persuaded the colonies that some unity was desirable in matters concerning Empire defence.

Several events, one of them the death of General Gordon at Khartoum in January 1885, both shocked and emphasised the colonists' feelings of Empire kinship. At the same time, more and more second and third generation South Australians went to England for their education, and thus came under the influence of the new Imperialism and new ideas on Imperial Federation. Since these were the sons of the well-to-do, they were bitterly opposed by the radical sections of the South Australian community, who saw in the new ideas a menace to the development of Australian nationalism.

Although participation in the naval defence of the Empire was formalised by the Australian Naval Agreement, 1887, Colonial participation in the military Empire defence did not materialise till the Boer War, <sup>The delay</sup> was mainly due to strong objections, from some sectors of the community, to formalised Imperial military defence commitments. Meanwhile, from about the middle eighties, the colonists had been developing a sort of dual, yet not divided loyalty, (7) which made them look on the Queen's enemies as on their own. Their colonial loyalty expressed itself in energetic, if sporadic, efforts to render their hearths and homes safe from hostile actions, while the concern engendered by non-British activities in the Pacific forced the colonists towards some measure of national co-operation to ensure the safety of the Empire around the shores of their continent. The despatch of the Soudan contingent in 1885 was the first manifestation of an emerging Empire loyalty. It

showed that at least some of the colonies were aware of the losses and sacrifices to be borne\* by a nation which was 'no longer a dependency but a responsible portion of the Empire' (8)(9).

Although dual loyalty formed the basis of Australian nationalism, the fact that the colonies aspired to an Australian navy played a significant role in its development. Thus, schemes suggested as alternatives to the Australian Naval Agreement 1887 were doomed to failure, because they would have thwarted Australia's naval aspirations - a point made quite strongly in 1898 by Robert Collins (10) - and would have, therefore, impeded the growth of Australia's national identity. It was characteristic of Australian nationalism that it could only prosper if it was underwritten by the approval and co-operation of the British Government, and on the issue of naval defence the Admiralty in the late nineties was not prepared to countersign. It is all the more ironical that the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865 should have been forgotten at the time, since this was the very act which, in effect, gave the stamp of approval to the prevailing conditions of dual loyalty. While promoting national aspirations by encouraging colonial self-reliance, the Act stipulated the colonies' liability to serve in Empire naval defence.

Moves towards national and Imperial co-operation were encouraged by the Colonial Defence Committee, which insisted throughout that a federal defence structure was practically indispensable for the creation of efficient defence forces. This in turn meant that, without a federal defence structure, effective colonial participation in Empire defence would also be impossible. From the early nineties, the Committee urged

\* See quotation from E. Barton's speech at West Maitland on 17th January, 1901. (3)

the colonies to adopt uniform military legislation, compatible with the Army Act of 1881 (11). It suggested in 1896, inter alia, that training of partially paid troops should take precedence over the training of unpaid volunteers, and that colonial reserves should be drawn from among men who had already received training in the partially paid forces (12). This measure had already been implemented in the South Australian Defence Act, 1895 (13) and was the probable reason for the Committee's recommendation that federal defence legislation should have been based on the South Australian legislation, and not on the Queensland Defence Act of 1889 (14), as suggested by military commandants in the Draft Federal Defence Agreement of 1894 (15), since the Queensland acts made no provision for an effective reserve force and, moreover, allowed substitutes for members compulsorily balloted for service.

In 1896, the Colonial Defence Committee sought to estimate the level of probable participation by colonial troops in Empire wars (16). The Committee's often stated preference for field forces over fixed defences may have been motivated, at least in part, by a desire to condition the colonies to the concept of Empire defence. This concept received a further impetus through the Committee's endorsement of schemes aimed at closer integration of Empire forces, including the interchange of military units. These schemes had been discussed at length at the 1897 Imperial Conference (17) and, although they did not materialise into concrete proposals, they did pave the way for a realistic scheme, put forward by the South Australian commandant, Colonel J.M. Gordon, for the raising of Imperial units in Australia (18) (19). Subsequently, Gordon's scheme became the blue-print for Australian overseas contingents.

South Australia's military machinery was put to the test, preparing for local defence during the 1885 crisis. Mobilisation of the troops proceeded smoothly, but administration and operational shortcomings soon became obvious. They originated from frequent reorganisations, changes in the Order of Battle and the difficulty of enforcing discipline among unpaid volunteers. At the same time, the standard of training was much higher than that of British regulars, particularly in tactics. South Australians had learned the lesson of Majuba Hill for they had realised even earlier that proficiency in fire and movement were more important than formal parade-ground drill - the basis of the traditional British training - and that mounted rifles were more efficient than a force of conventional cavalry.

Lessons learnt from the 1885 crisis brought about improvements in army administration and in mobilisation procedures, so that in 1899 the Colony was able to raise, equip and dispatch an effective expeditionary force within a month of the out-break of hostilities. The improvements were aided by the progressive defence legislation of 1895. Although, in practice, enlistment was voluntary, legislation enshrined the principle of compulsory service as a civic duty, created the concept of a citizen soldier, free from traditional labels of class stigma inherent in the concepts of militia men and volunteers, and, finally, developed a system of reserves, far in advance of its equivalent in the other colonies.

For all its military advantages and comprehensiveness, South Australian legislation did not have as strong an influence in the shaping of Commonwealth legislation as one might have expected. After years of vacillation between the volunteer movement and the militia principle, South Australians did arrive

at a citizen soldier concept which was both militarily effective and politically acceptable. Unfortunately, what was politically and militarily feasible in a homogeneous colonial society was not possible in the wider national community, made up of heterogeneous elements, with widely varying backgrounds, and where military effectiveness had to be sacrificed to Australia-wide political considerations.

Although the efforts of South Australians were lost amid the first Commonwealth defence arrangements and subsequent attempts to create an Australian citizen army on the principle of compulsory military training, it has been the aim of this work to bring to light an aspect of colonial South Australian life which otherwise might have remained buried in historical obscurity.

GOVERNORS AND ADMINISTRATORSOFSOUTH AUSTRALIA 1836 - 1901

Captain John Hindmarsh, R.N.	28.12.1836 - 16. 7.1838
George Milner Stephen	16. 7.1838 - 17.10.1838
Lieutenant- <sup>Colonel</sup> George Gawler	17.10.1838 - 15. 5.1841
Captain George Grey	15. 5.1841 - 25.10.1845
Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Holt Robe	25.10.1845 - 2. 8.1848
Sir Henry Edward Fox Young	2. 8.1848 - 20.10.1854
Boyle Travers Finnis	20.10.1854 - 8. 6.1855
Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell	8. 6.1855 - 4. 3.1862
Sir Dominick Daly	4. 3.1862 - 19. 2.1868
Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Gilbert Hamley	19. 2.1868 - 15. 2.1869
Sir James Fergusson	16. 2.1869 - 18. 4.1873
Sir Richard Davies Hanson	7.12.1872 - 8. 6.1873
Sir Anthony Musgrave	9. 6.1873 - 29. 1.1877
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	29. 1.1877 - 24. 3.1877
Sir William W. Cairns	24. 3.1877 - 17. 5.1877
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	17. 5.1877 - 2.10.1877
Major-General Sir William Francis Drummond Jervois	2.10.1877 - 9. 1.1883
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	9. 1.1883 - 19. 2.1883
Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson	19. 2.1883 - 5. 3.1889
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	6. 3.1889 - 11. 4.1889
Earl of Kintore (Algernon Hawkins Thomond Keith-Falconer)	11. 4.1889 - 10. 4.1895
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	17. 1.1895 - 29.10.1895
Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton	29.10.1895 - 29. 3.1899
Chief Justice Sir Samuel James Way	30. 9.1898 - 10. 4.1899
Baron Hallam Tennyson	10. 4.1899 - 31.12.1900

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A.	Argus (Melbourne)
A.A.J.	Australian Army Journal (Canberra)
Adel. Tim.	Adelaide Times
Aust. Jnl. Pol. Hist.	Australian Journal of Politics and History
A.D.C.G.	Assistant Deputy Commissary General - Letter Book
BB	Statistical Returns of the Colony of South Australia (Blue Books)
Chr.	Chronicle (Adelaide)
C. of A. Gazette	Commonwealth of Australia Gazette
CO	Colonial Office Records (London)
C/PP	Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Papers
CSC/G/	Chief-Secretary of South Australia - Correspondence with other Colonial governments
CSC/GRG	Chief-Secretary of South Australia - Special Series
CSC/I/	" " " " " - Inwards Correspondence
CSC/O/	" " " " " - Outwards Correspondence
CSC/O/...(F)	" " " " " - (financial)
C/wealth Arch.	Commonwealth of Australia Archives
GD/I/	Governor of South Australia - Inwards Dispatches
GD/O/	" " " " " - Outwards "
/circ.	" " " " " - Circular
/conf.	" " " " " - Confidential
/sec.	" " " " " - Secret
/sep.	" " " " " - Separate
/suppl.	" " " " " - Supplement
/tel.	" " " " " - Telegram

GG	South Australian Government Gazette
H.A.	House of Assembly of South Australia - Hansard
H.S.A.N.Z.	Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand
Jnl. Mil. Hist. Soc. Aust.	Journal of the Military Historical Society of Australia (Sabretache)
Jnl. and Proc. U.S.I. of N.S.W.	Journal and Proceedings of the United Service Institution of New South Wales
L	Letter
L.C.	Legislative Council of South Australia - Hansard
MF	Microfilm
MS	Manuscript
NS	New series
O.	Observer (Adelaide)
PP	Parliamentary Papers - South Australia
PP (U.K.)	" " - Great Britain
R.	Register (Adelaide)
R.U.S.I.	Journal and Proceedings Royal United Service Institute (London)
S.A.	South Australian
S.A. Gaz. & Col. Reg.	South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register
S.A.A.	South Australian Almanach
S.A. Statutes	Acts of Parliament of the Colony of South Australia
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
Suppl.	Supplement
Tas. Hist. Res. Ass.	Historical Research Association of Tasmania
U.S. Mag.	Colburn's United Services Magazine (London)

Conventions Adopted in Citations

- (1) Monographs, Pamphlets, etc. - Title underlined
- (2) Serial Articles - Title of serial underlined
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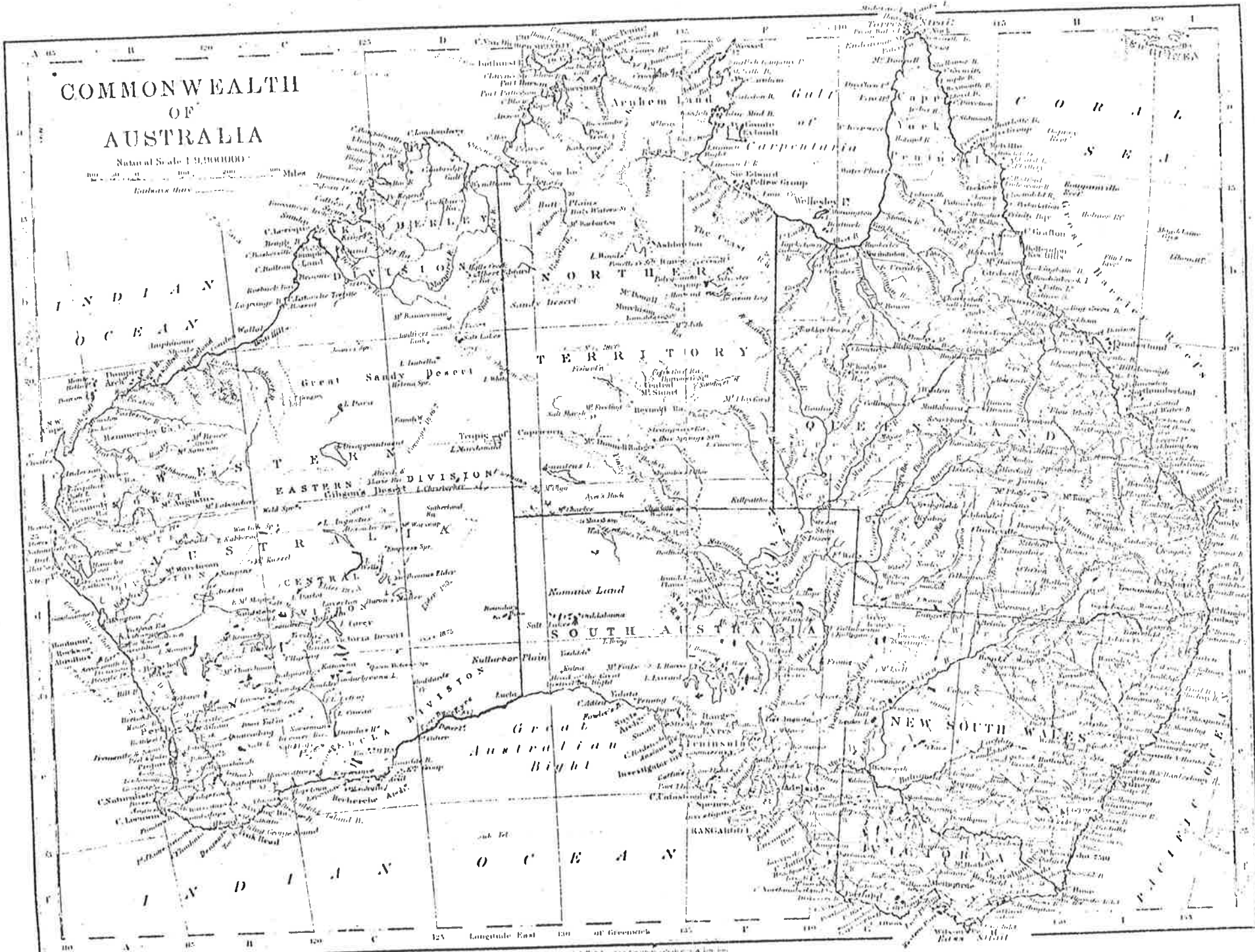
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**COMMONWEALTH  
OF  
AUSTRALIA**

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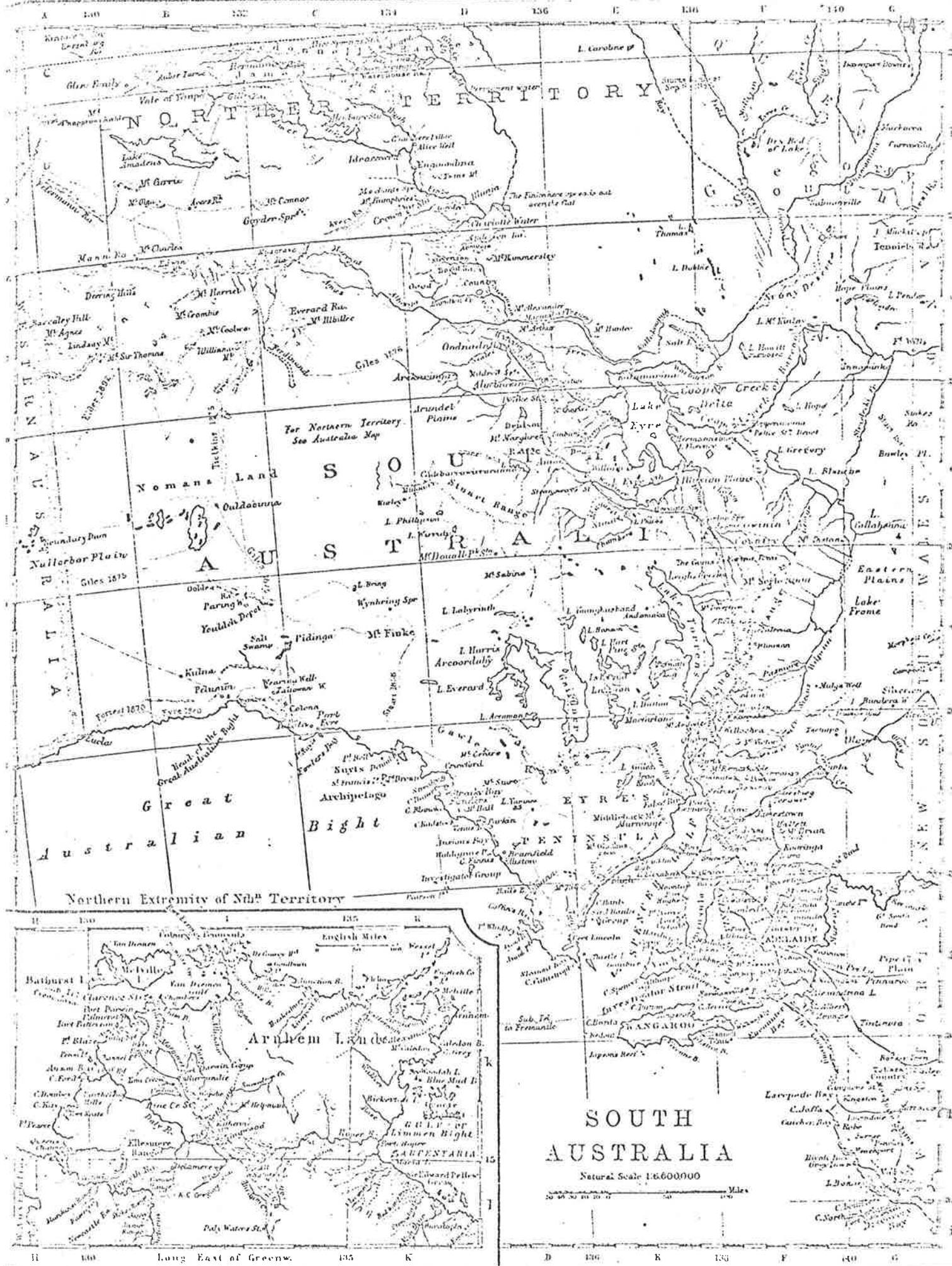
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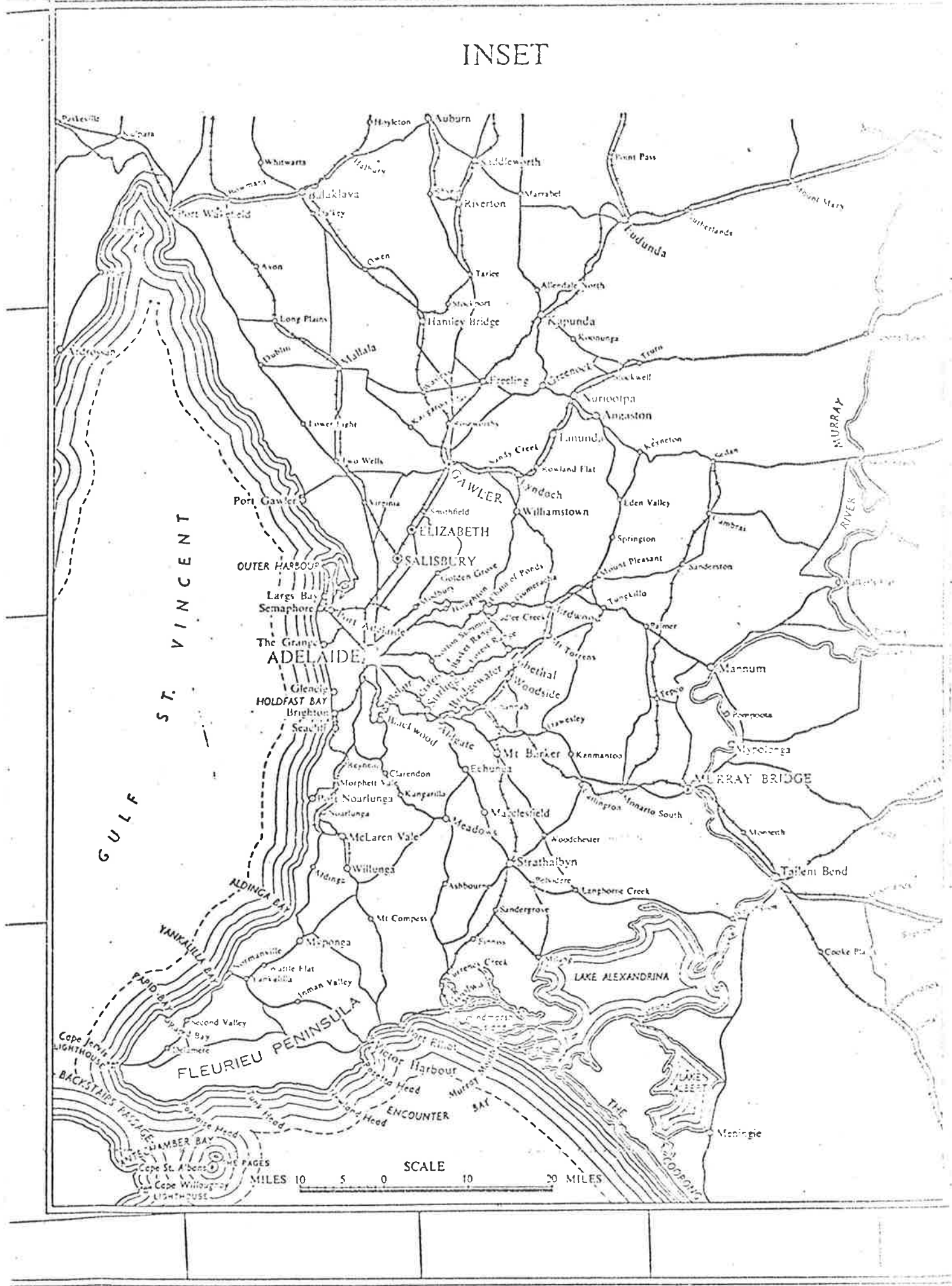
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# INSET



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