

A new defence force.pdf



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A NEW DEFENCE FORCE.

WHATEVER may be done in the way of providing military defences for the province, the first step should be the organisation of an artillery corps. We mean such a body of men as shall be effective, and not inferior in training, efficiency, and skill to the artillery which forms part of the Imperial army. When it is considered that an efficient artilleryman cannot be made out of a recruit in less than three years, and then only after undergoing an arduous and uncommencing course of training and instruction, the idea of expecting a locally-instructed corps to answer the demands which warlike operations of the present day make upon soldiers may be abandoned. If a war breaks out in Europe, in which Great Britain becomes entangled, it will break out in a very short time, and after it does there is no knowing when South Australia may not be made the object of attack. Whatever force, then, we intend to rely on should be established at once, for dangerous as delays proverbially are, in time of war they are destructive.

For years past the Imperial Government has discouraged the maintenance of garrisons in the colonies, and the fate which met applications for batteries of Royal Artillery, when made by New South Wales and Victoria, was not such as to give any prospect that South Australia would obtain assistance of that kind, no matter how urgent her request might be. We should be told, if we did apply, that we might rely upon having the assistance of naval protection which the maritime resources of the British Admiralty could afford to us and that for the rest we must depend on ourselves. It stands to reason that we must then be prepared on our own defence, not only to second the efforts of Her Majesty's cruisers, but to be able to do without them in case of emergency. This we cannot do without a sufficiently numerous artillery corps, equal at least in skill to that of any force which we may expect to encounter. Her Majesty's Indian army fortunately is able to provide us with the material we require, and it may be brought

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