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EXPANSION OF ARMY CADETS

A country-wide expansion of the Cadet Force has been initiated by the War Office to provide boys with pre-entry training for the Army. Recently, recruiting figures have risen sharply, and more than 150 new cadet units have been formed in the past month. Today there are altogether 530 cadet units, with a total strength of nearly 60,000 cadets, compared with 198 units of a strength of 13,000 cadets at this time last year.

The training will be based on the "Certificate A" syllabus, as for the Junior Training Corps, and Cadets who wish to become specialists or tradesmen in the Army will be helped to start their training while they are in the Cadet Force. Apart from its military aspects, however, the Cadet Force is one of the recognised national youth organisations and its general object is to train boys to become good citizens. Thus its development has been planned by the War Office in close co-operation with the Board of Education and with other youth organisations, both service and civilian, and also through local Education Authorities and their Youth Committees.

The expansion of the Army Cadets in each County is directed by a County Cadet Committee, set up under the Lord Lieutenant. These Committees are charged with the formation of new Cadet Units, and any person, or group of boys, wishing to form a new Cadet Unit should write to the Secretary of the County Cadet Committee (who is also Secretary of the County Territorial Army Association), c/o the County Territorial Army Association offices. Boys who wish to join an Army Cadet Unit can obtain the address of the nearest unit either from the local Home Guard or the Local Education Committee.

Each Cadet Unit is affiliated to the local unit of the Home Guard, into whose ranks it is hoped all Cadets will go when they become 17. Through the Home Guard, Army Cadets can get many kinds of help, such as the use of a drill hall and the loan of instructors and training equipment. There are no rigid rules as to the number of cadets in a Unit or sub-unit.

The War Office is supplying free uniform, the battle dress of the Army, and is also providing financial assistance to the Cadet Force in the form of capitation grants for efficient Cadets between the ages of 14 and 17 and for those who obtain Certificate A.

The new uniform has in the front of the field service cap a small blue strip: a shoulder flash bearing the words "Cadet Force": and a shoulder title giving the name of the County.

WAR OFFICE

The following are notes prepared for a speech to be delivered by the Right Hon. C.R. Attlee at Liverpool on Sunday, March 22, 1942.

As it is possible that Mr. Attlee may make several last-minute alterations, the speech should be checked with delivery.

A distinguished American the other day showed some friends of mine a newspaper and said "There are five columns on this page, every one of them full of criticism of your war effort. Why don't you tell us more of your wonderful achievements?" Well, we have a national habit of criticism and self-depreciation. Newspapers exist to give people news and one sinner is better news value than ninety and nine just persons. The conviction of a black market operator is news, but the honest dealing of the vast majority of shopkeepers is not. A story about some workers said not to be doing their best or a factory held up for raw material is apt to be given more prominence than the duller account of hard work and good management. This is inevitable, and criticism is good for all of us provided that it is fair and well balanced.

Like the great majority of people in every walk of life most of the newspapers are admirable, but there are a few exceptions. We had to warn one last week. One of the things for which we are fighting is the liberty of the Press, but any Government worthy of the name if it considers that a newspaper is harming the national interest in time of war by abuse of that liberty is bound to take action.

I find also that this national habit of self-depreciation is not always understood in other countries. It often gives foreigners quite a wrong impression of what is actually going on in this country. They do not realise in the least the magnitude of our achievement. They do not understand the devotion to duty of the vast majority of our people. They think that the exceptions are the rule. So I want this afternoon to have a little holiday from criticism and to try to put things in a true perspective. I am not doing it in any spirit of complacency. I am not just trying to defend the Government. I want to tell you what the British people have done and are doing.

When you try to measure up what we have done, you must consider the magnitude of the task, and the means which were at our disposal. What is our first achievement; just this, that we have survived for nearly two years when most people outside our Empire thought that we were bound to be destroyed. After Dunkirk most foreigners would not have given you very favourable odds on our ability to survive. What had we to do? First we had to re-equip our army and largely to build up an army to be strong enough to make Hitler think twice before he attacked us. We had to build up an Army in the Middle East. We had to strengthen and maintain our garrisons all over the world, in Gibraltar, in Malta, in Africa and in Asia. We had to smash Mussolini's African Empire in Abyssinia and Libya. We had to beat off the German attack there. We had to try to help Greece. We had to secure Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. We had to send what forces we could spare to the Far East.

In these tasks we got splendid help from the Dominions, India, the Colonies and from Allied forces. All these forces had to be armed and equipped mainly from this country with arms and munitions made by the men and women of this country working often under blitz conditions. Then we had to fight the battle of Britain and provide planes not only for use at home, but in every theatre of war. Thirdly we had to build warships and merchantmen to add to our strength and to replace losses.

When Russia came into the war we at once agreed to send planes and tanks and other things to her. All this meant an immense productive effort. Let me give you a few figures:-

In tanks we are now producing five times as much as in those hectic days after Dunkirk and twice as much as six months ago though all the time all instruments of war get more complicated.

In naval tonnage we completed in the last quarter of 1941 four times as much as in the last quarter before the war and twice as much merchant shipping. Our actual current production of ships is greater than at any time in the last war when there were more yards, more men and no blitz and black-out.

Taking all our warlike stores together the production is ten times greater than at the beginning of the war.

Next think of the work of transportation. We have had to import our food, raw materials and many other commodities. We have had to carry supplies overseas to every theatre of war. We have had to transport troops with a much reduced mercantile marine subject to fierce and constant attack from sea and air. We have had to carry our supplies often by long and devious routes. Take one example. During 1941 to support our armies in the Middle East 300 ships were continuously employed mostly on the 11,000 mile voyage round the Cape. Over a million tons of goods, over 30,000 vehicles had to be shipped to this theatre of war. All these had to be convoyed by the Navy.

When I think of the achievements of sea transport, I am lost in admiration for the officers and men of the mercantile marine, for the officers and men of the Navy, yes, and for the dockers of Liverpool, London and other ports. When I think of the achievements of our workers in the shipyards, I am proud of them. Do you wonder that I get impatient at times with the people who are going round accusing the workers of slacking. Take another achievement - coal. With many men away on service, with a steadily ageing labour force, with an ever-increasing demand, with all kinds of transport difficulties the miners continue to win the coal on which our industrial activity depends.

Take another lot of workers - the women. There is a wonderful effort. Women changing their jobs, going to live away from their accustomed dwelling places, taking on new jobs, serving in armed forces, running their homes under difficult circumstances and looking after other people's children. It's a great work they are doing.

Take another lot of workers - the farm workers. Despite shortage of labour and every kind of difficulty there has been a great increase of home-produced food.

Don't forget either the difficulties overcome by those who manage industry and commerce and the men who manage the farms. They have had to make all kinds of changes. Many of them have seen their industries destroyed or their businesses concentrated. Remember too that these same fellow citizens of ours who have done this great work are the people who also do voluntary work, Home Guard, A.R.P., Fire-Watching, etc.

Believe me it's a great story. There's a great story to tell too of the efforts put out by the Dominions, by India and by the Colonies. Some day the story of these days will be written in happier and more peaceful times, and the children will be inspired by the courage and devotion of their forbears.

I have stressed these things because we are passing through difficult and testing times, times that try the soul of men.

We have suffered serious set-backs. It's no use pretending that we haven't. Those set-backs are harder to bear because they are far away. We can do little about them. People feel a sense of frustration. When the blitz was on we were right in it and there were things to be done. Now people feel that they can only look on. They wonder what will happen next, and whether the Government are doing all they can about it. It is quite a natural feeling, but it tends to make people look about for someone to blame.

I wish I could tell you more than I can, but it is impossible to tell you things without telling the enemy. I think today that our people are perhaps a little bewildered. Events happen unexpectedly to them. They wonder why. They tend to think that the Government is also bewildered. They tend to think that the Government has like themselves been taken by surprise and then they say "Why has not the Government foreseen? Why has it not done this or that which seems now so obvious?" People who like to make trouble say "The Government has been caught napping".

All this is no doubt very disturbing, but it is all based on a lack of knowledge of the realities of the situation. The Government have access, of course, to sources of information denied to the general public but they can't make use of it beforehand to warn people except in the most general way.

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Let me take as an example the War in the Far East, and the successes of the Japanese. What was the position there? We and our friends the Dutch and the Americans had in the Pacific area a number of scattered possessions. They had been acquired over a long period of years without much difficulty and had been retained through one great factor, Sea Power. As long as British and American sea power was there as the guardian of peace, so long and so long only were they safe.

In the years before the war, aggressive as Japan always had been, she would have thought long before challenging either the British or the American navies so long as these Powers had their hands free. But as soon as Britain was engaged in a deadly grapple with Germany, her fleet was largely occupied with the defence of trade routes, the defence of Britain and the threat from enemy warships. America was neutral and at that time seemed likely to remain neutral. Directly France fell and the attack on Britain began, the possibility of Japanese attack was never absent from the minds of the Government. But most people ignored it. Quite naturally they were fully occupied with the struggle taking place to hold this country. Equally the Government was fully aware of the danger which threatened our shores. Every nerve had to be strained to defeat that danger. We had to rearm our regular forces. We had to arm the Home Guard. We had to strengthen our air force for the testing time ahead.

We had to think of something else. Even in the agony of the Battle of Britain, we had to reinforce the Middle East. We had to give way at first. We were on the defensive in Libya. We had to abandon Somaliland, but we prepared for the come back. When the time came we destroyed Mussolini's new Roman Empire. We restored the Abyssinians their freedom. We smashed the Italians in Libya. But you did not know at the time and we could not tell you the risks we had to run and the strains we had to take in order to accomplish this.

Could we at that time have afforded ships, planes, men, tanks and guns to strengthen our garrisons in the Far East against a possible, because it was only a possible attack, from Japan in the year 1940? Could we have allowed the Mediterranean and Egypt to be overrun because we were apprehensive about the Far East? Of course not. We had to have regard to priorities.

There is nothing worse in war than trying to be equally strong at all points when you have only limited forces. One must concentrate one's forces and recognise that losses may have to be sustained in some theatre of war. By no conceivable means could we have concentrated in the Far East military, naval or air power to equal Japan. We may well be thankful that she did not strike in 1940. We could not have done anything.

Let us consider what happened next. The Germans attacked South East against Greece and Jugo-Slavia. We went to the help of our Allies, not just through sentiment, though the moral factor cannot be ignored. We should have felt ashamed and you would have blamed us if we had not helped the Greeks.

We failed to stop the Germans, but to have failed does not mean that we should not have tried. You can't wage war on a basis of 100% chances in your favour. If we had always demanded this we should not have won the battle of Britain, because most people outside the British Empire thought our chances very small.

Still in defence of the Middle East we had to go into Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, while as you know in Libya, after a set-back and a long holding out at Tobruk, we attacked again, frustrating by anticipation Rommel's attack. Here the battle sways backwards and forwards, a long-drawn-out fight with value not only for holding off attack from Egypt but for drawing enemy resources from other areas. This fight remember has to be nourished with reinforcements sent from here by a long route. Remember too that throughout all this time the gallant defenders of Malta have had to be supported.

Finally there came the attack on Russia. We have rightly helped with planes and tanks and other supplies.

All these things have meant a heavy drain on our shipping, and on our naval escorts on which we depend for our food and our supplies and for transporting our troops and our air forces.

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That was the state of affairs when Japan launched her attack. At no time were we in a position to pour in great reinforcements to the Far East. What we could send we did. What steps we could take we took, but in the very nature of things this was bound to be insufficient.

The sudden and treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour and the loss of our two ships gravely altered the balance of naval power in the Pacific. Japan had the initiative and for a time, but only, I believe for a time, the power to strike hard blows at us. We have not yet got full reports of all that happened in the Far East. We must necessarily suspend judgment until we have.

We have of course sent reinforcements. Someone will say "If you could send reinforcements, why could you not have had the forces there on the spot?" The answer is of course that we have had to send forces where the attack has been made, but you cannot lock up forces all over the world in anticipation of an attack, unless you have enormous unlimited resources. A general in battle has to keep his troops under his hand to throw in where they are needed. He may have to take risks in one part of the battlefield in order to cope with a more imminent danger elsewhere.

If you survey the field in its widest aspects you will see that the actual prospect is far brighter than it was two years ago. Then we could only hold on like grim death with no immediate prospect of help. Since then Russia has come in, an enormous alteration of the scales.

With the entry of Japan, the Axis have thrown in their last reserves, very highly trained reserves, but on our side has come in the great Chinese nation that has for so long put up such a splendid fight and the United States of America whose enormous strength will need time to develop. From now on despite apparent successes the scales are tilting against the dictators.

The United Nations have a great potential preponderance of strength but time is needed for it to develop. Meanwhile we must hold on as we held on after Dunkirk when hope was far dimmer, when we could hardly see a gleam of light at the end of the tunnel.

I am not going to spend time on telling you of the great resources of America, nor will I estimate the material strength which the United Nations can develop, because I want to say a few words on another aspect of this contest.

This fight is not just a fight on the material plane, it is a spiritual contest between good and evil. Hitler is the incarnation of the dark side of the character of the German people. In every nation as in every human being, there is a dark and a light side. A Jekyll and a Hyde. Hitler appeals to all the worst in the nature of the Germans, their brutality, their lust for power, their cruelty and their false sentiment. He has been in power long enough to bring to his side a big proportion of the German nation. In particular he has debauched the youth of the nation.

He has quite deliberately set himself to destroy the civilisation which has been built up through the centuries on the teaching of Christ. Faulty and feeble though the expression of those teachings are in our human institutions yet we do avowedly or not accept those teachings as embodying the ideal for which we strive. We reverence the Christian virtues. Hitler and his followers despise them. They have no use for mercy, pity and love. They have no reverence for justice. They hate freedom. Hitler like Milton's Satan, has said "Evil, be thou my good." But remember that Milton's Satan had the fanatical devotion of the other fallen angels.

We who fight for the right must not fail in devotion. We must come to this fight in the spirit of Crusaders dedicated to a divine purpose. If we do not do this there is always the danger that in fighting the fiend we shall ourselves acquire something of his devilish characteristics. We must come through this war with our ideals unscathed. We must come through resolved that we will build a world of justice, freedom and love. Hitler's greatest successes have been won against nations that were divided. He had them already partly conquered before the battle.

Every one of us has within him the Fifth Column of selfishness and indifference. If we wish to be worthy of the high duty to which this generation has been called we must purge our own souls and preserve in our every-day tasks the spirit of devotion and sacrifice displayed by so many of our fellow men and women in the days of the blitz.