



of a complaint made by the Admiralty that on board the carrier there is a good deal of duplication of effort between the purely Naval Service and the Air Force.

We think this subject should be looked into by the two Departments concerned, and we do not doubt that arrangements can be made by which all overlapping can be effectively avoided.

We now come to the last class of questions with which we have to deal, which are at once the most difficult and the most important. We are strongly of opinion, and we have every hope that the two Services share our view, that, since in war the Services may have to co-operate, it is vital that in time of peace they should form an accurate estimate of each other's needs and capacities.

We therefore recommend:—

(i) That Naval officers should be appointed to the Air Staff.  
(ii) That Air Force officers should be appointed to the Naval War Staff.

(iii) That some means should be devised by which the wealth of technical knowledge at the disposal of the Admiralty should be utilised in the technical departments of the Air Ministry, preferably by reinforcement of the staff of these departments by naval technicians.

These recommendations refer exclusively to the headquarters of the two Services; but it is perhaps even more important that the junior ranks of the two Services, who will in time occupy responsible positions, should have a considerable sprinkling of persons familiar with the needs and capacities of the other Service.

The Air Force look to a system of naval seconding for carrying out half this policy, and we cannot believe that the Admiralty would be averse to having members of the Air Force on board the carriers. Unfortunately, seconding from the Navy to the Air Force, as at present understood, must be deemed to have been hitherto a failure, and we find it difficult to believe that, if the present system remains unchanged and unexplained, any great improvement is likely to occur. We cannot be surprised that a young officer who has just joined the Navy is reluctant to abandon, even temporarily, the department under which he expected to serve and to exchange it for one which is essentially different. The feeling is natural, and cannot be ignored.

It must, however, be pointed out that if the word "seconding" is thus used this is not what any naval officer under the present scheme is expected to do. In ordinary practice, when we say that an officer is "seconded" to another Service we no doubt intend to express the idea that for the duties which he had to perform and for the authorities he had to obey in the Service which he has temporarily left, will be substituted new duties and new authorities. But this does not really represent the facts in the case of so-called "seconding" from the Navy into the Air Force. The duties of the seconded officer, though carried out in the air, remain, nevertheless, Naval duties, and the captain whom he has to obey continues to be a naval captain.

In order to make this situation perfectly clear, we recommend that no seconded naval officer shall be asked to perform non-naval air duties, except with the consent of the Admiralty. We believe the Air Force are prepared to accept this principle.

If this recommendation be carried into effect, the most important change involved in the operation of what is (somewhat inaccurately) called "seconding" is the change from the naval to a flying uniform—a change which can hardly be said to touch the essence of the situation.

We suggest, however, in order to meet the sentimental, though not on that account unimportant, objection, that the uniform of a Naval flying man who, except for his period of training, is to all intents and purposes still under the Admiralty, should be distinguished from the flying men under the Air Force by some differentiating badge or mark. This would be the outward and visible sign that he still remains a member of the Service which he originally joined. It would be a clear indication that what he proposes to do is to add accomplishments in Naval flying to the other accomplishments which his brother officers are cultivating. If such a plan were found practicable, the objection felt by the Admiralty to the introduction of what they deem an alien element into the domestic life of the ship should be largely mitigated.

It might well be that, if this scheme succeeded, the number of officers seconded from the Navy to the Air Force would exceed the 30 per cent. of the total contemplated by the Air Service.

We see no reason why 30 per cent. should be regarded as the maximum, and we should propose to leave it to the Admiralty to determine what the proportion should be, subject to the proviso that not less than 30 per cent. of Air Force officers,

whether regular or short service, should serve on board the carriers.

There is another point of great practical importance on which something must be said. It is agreed that the work of spotting for naval gunnery is one which should be undertaken in all cases by Naval officers, but such investigations as we have been able to make convince us that naval spotting and fleet reconnaissance cannot be sharply divided, and that the officer entrusted with the one may inevitably find himself called upon to perform the other also. We have been unable to discover any objection to this change, which, on the face of it, seems obviously reasonable.

We therefore recommend that fleet reconnaissance, as well as naval spotting, should be entrusted to naval officers seconded or otherwise.

If anybody will take the trouble to read the evidence given before us they will, we believe, be impressed by the number of problems for which a solution has been found by the two Departments or suggested in this Report. We earnestly trust that no merely technical difficulties will be allowed to stand in the way of a settlement which in the public interest is most urgently required.

(Signed) BALFOUR (Chairman).  
PEEL.  
WEIR.

M. P. A. HANKEY (Secretary).  
2, Whitehall Gardens.  
July 21, 1923.

The concluding section of the Report is devoted to a statement of the decisions taken by the Government on the recommendations of the National and Imperial Defence Committee. It is stated that it is considered impracticable to supersede the Ministerial heads of the three Fighting Services by making them subordinate to a Minister of Defence, and the alternative plan for amalgamating the three Service Departments is equally impracticable. On the other hand, it is considered that the present system of co-ordination by the Committee of Imperial Defence is insufficient, that Committee being advisory and consultative but not executive, the power of initiative resting with the Government Departments and with the Prime Minister. Continuing, the Report states:—

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

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

"In accordance with the terms of the Treasury Minute of May 4, 1904, constituting the Committee of Imperial Defence in its present form, the Committee of Imperial Defence will continue to consist of the Prime Minister, as President, with such other members as, having regard to the nature of the subject to be discussed, he may from time to time summon to assist him. In pursuance of a decision by the Prime Minister, the Committee places on record that the following should be members: The Chairman (Deputy to the Prime Minister), the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for Air, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Financial Secretary, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Secretary of State for India, the Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services, the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury as head of the Civil Service. In addition to these, other British or Dominion Ministers of the Crown and other officials, or persons having special qualifications, will be summoned as members by the President according to the nature of the business.

"The functions of the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence will be:—

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

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

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

"(iv) Assisted by the three Chiefs of Staff, as laid down in