

INDIAN DEFENCE PROBLEM

Being a plea for saving Rs. 28 Crores a year
by immediate Indianization etc.

OF

British rank and file only

A message of hope for the Indian Tax-payer

A STUDY

*For Statesmen, Publicists, Politicians and Military
experts, both Indian and British*

BY

CAPT. G. V. MODAK

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AN
INDIAN SOLDIER'S STUDY PRESENTED
TO
ALL CHAMPIONS OF INDIA'S CASE
FOR
ECONOMY IN MILITARY EXPENDITURE
WITHOUT
PREJUDICE TO EFFICIENCY

FOREWORD

Captain Modak is evidently putting his leisure in retirement to good use. He has spent many years in active military service in an important Indian State. He has written books in Marathi on the subject of Military history and the battle-fields of the Maratha period. He has studied the facts and figures about the present organisation of the Army in India, both British and Indian. And he has given much thought to the problem of the defence of India by her own sons, as a part of the greater problem of responsible Self-Government in India at the hands of Indians themselves. In this way Captain Modak has qualified himself to be regarded as a kind of an expert, by which word I only mean one who knows much more of any particular subject than the average man of his own generation.

It is natural, therefore, that Captain Modak should succeed in engaging the attention of the reader, who cares to dip into his present book on the Indian Defence Problem. The problem has two important aspects, political and financial. But both have a common background in the political domination of India by England. Remove this domination; replace it by an equitable arrangement in which India may guide and work out her own destiny by her own hands; and India will certainly be able to solve the problem of her Military defence; so that her sons should have the proud privilege of defending their hearths and homes against any internal or external foe, and yet save quite a lot of money to be more usefully spent on some real Nation-Building

Departments. This domination of India by England, this denial to her sons of the right to shape their own administrative policy, that is at the bottom of her woes, not the least of which are the emasculation of Indian people, the humiliation of foreign mercenaries domineering over Indian's brave and warlike sons, and the financial ruin involved in maintaining a costly military establishment.

Captain Modak's book deals with all these topics in varying proportions of space and detail. There are not many striking or new points in his treatment of the topic of the Military policy of the British Imperial Government as it affects India. But his readers will feel particularly thankful to Captain Modak for his well informed constructive criticism on the topics of replacement of British by Indian soldiers as well as officers, and the great economy in finance that may be effected by this replacement, in almost all the departments of the Army in India. The wealth of quotation/ in which he indulges in proving his theme, is equalled by the instructive tabular statements which he marshals for the same purpose. And so long as no champion of the Imperial cause comes forward to dispute the truth of those quotations and tables, Captain Modak could legitimately claim that he has made out an unanswerable case for a National policy in Military administration in India.

This whole question becomes necessarily invested with absorbing public attention and interest, in view of the fact that the question of dominion status for India is made out to be interlocked with the question of India wielding responsibility for her own defence. The interest deepens, as it were, owing to the conspiracy of comparative silence on the part of British

representatives on this topic in the deliberations of the three Round Table Conferences. Consequently Captain Modak's book has a great chance of being appreciated when the Joint Select Committee, set up by the Parliament, will be discussing the White Paper, embodying the Cabinet's deliberate conclusions on the subject of the immediate political reforms in India.

There is much food for thought in what Captain Modak writes in Chapters VII and VIII about the Military inefficiency and the Economic inefficiency of the British soldier and Officer in India. The Military inefficiency is due to many causes, physical as well as geographical. During the period of his short service in India, the British soldier spends a good deal of time in adapting himself to the Indian climate and making himself familiar with his geographical surroundings. Even when the Government spends quite a good lot on the comforts and conveniences of the British troops, they cannot keep themselves up to the normal standard of health and fitness. At page 175, Captain Modak gives a statement about the incidence of diseases among British and Indian soldiers, which should prove very instructive. Then, again, British troops cannot be so useful in mountain warfare as the Indian troops. Statistics relating to the use of British and Indian troops in campaigns on the Frontier, show that the ratio of British troops to Indian troops employed in such campaigns has varied from 1:6 to 1:50. Captain Modak calculates the total rate of the inefficiency of the British troops at 43 p. c. due to sickness, invalidation, mortality etc. The British soldier is economically inefficient in the sense that he costs to India much more than an Indian soldier, whether it be peace-time or war-time. This double inefficiency of

British troops is an additional argument for Indianisation of the Army in India, both officers and men. Captain Modak says that a saving of about 30 crores will be effected by the substitution of British by Indian troops! At pages 200 and 201 he goes into the figures of possible reduction of cost in various Military departments, and it would be interesting to see if anybody could contradict his view in this matter. In fact the whole of chapter VIII is highly interesting reading from this point of view. In chapter IX again the author practically covers the same ground, giving a number of tables of comparative cost as between the British and Indian soldier in India, and also as between the Military Department in England and in India.

By far the most important topic dealt with by Captain Modak is that in Chapter XIV, in which he maintains that the crux of the whole position lies in the amalgamation scheme and the partnership scheme, in which India is made to borrow British troops for her defence from England, and in which all manner of legitimate and illegitimate, equitable and inequitable financial burdens are imposed upon India under an Imperial authority, which cannot be called to account under the present condition of India as a dependency. The scheme is summarised in the familiar name of Capitation Charges; and all the three safe-guards, *viz.* safe-guards relating to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Finance, have a direct bearing upon the continuance of the present system of India's military dependence upon England, for which England is fighting.

This capitation charges business has a very long and painful history; and it can be proved by chapter and verse, quoted from the criticisms offered thereon not only by non-official experts, but by the Government of India.

itself, which from time to time has felt qualms of conscience, as a Government entrusted with responsibility of safeguarding India's interest in the first instance. In that task the Indian Government, however, has always failed; because its occasional instincts as a National Government were summarily suppressed by the Home authorities. The question has been considered from time to time on the representations of the Indian Government itself, by *ad hoc* Committees, such as Tulloch Committee of 1860-61, Northbrook Committee, Welbey Commission etc. And the latest is the Committee, which was sitting in England side by side with the third Round Table Conference, and on which sat two eminent Indian Judges—Justice Sir Shadilal and Justice Sir Suleman. It is useless to anticipate what the result of the deliberations of this last Committee will be, though Dame Rumour says that the Committee is going to give some relief to India. It is too much to hope, however, that it will be either a real or a great relief, or that it will solve the complicated knot of amalgamated military authority, shared by the Indian Government and the British Government at Home, and in which the latter necessarily enjoys a whip hand.

I will leave this topic with only two quotations. The first is an extract from the representation made by the Government of India in 1878, and the second is an extract of remarks made by Colonel Buchanan, a member of the Welbey Commission. (1) "Placed as it was under the serious responsibility of so administering the affairs of the greatest dependency of the British Crown, that while British supremacy is strictly guarded, the means of securing that end shall not unduly weigh on the people of the country, it was constrained to represent to her Majesty's Government that the burden

thrown upon India on account of the British troops is excessive, and beyond what an impartial judgment would assign, in considering the relative material wealth of the two countries, and the mutual obligations that subsist between them. All that we can do is to appeal to the British Government for an impartial view of the relative financial capacity of the two countries to bear the charges, that arise from the maintenance of the army of Great Britain, and for a generous consideration of the share assigned by the wealthiest nation in the world to a dependancy so comparatively poor and so little advanced as India."

(2) Says Mr. Buchanan, "In order to justify the purpose, various conflicting theories are brought forward for the supposed relation of India to the Home Government. Sometimes she is treated as an independent power; at other times as in a position of strict administrative and legitimate dependancy. Sometimes she is spoken of as partner in a joint concern, and at other times as a more or less unwilling purchaser in a limited market."

In trying to solve this muddle, one naturally feels inclined to ask the question, *viz.* which of the two will come first? Responsible Self-Government in India by Indians, or the removal of the present inequitable Financial and Military arrangements? One feels no comfort in the declaration made on this topic by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Thomas, who presided over the Defence Committee of the R. T. C. *viz.* that "Whilst we would all agree that the Indianization of the army is a desirable end and something to work for, it is not one which need necessarily precede Responsible Government." This means that the Responsible Government that we shall get will be so safe-guarded and

limited in power, that even in that 'Responsible Government' the present inequitable arrangements about Defence will continue for as long as we know not how long. But let us hope that we get at least the Responsible Government, so that we may work that lever for what it may be worth, in destroying the present inequitable amalgamation and partnership system.

The last point Captain Modak deals with in his book, is the position of *non-possumus* taken by Sir Samuel Hoare at the R. T. C., and the conundrums he has proposed as difficulties in the way of India getting full responsible Self-Government in Military matters. Capt. Modak has supplied answers to those conundrums point by point; but the subject is bound to reappear in a contestable form in the "White Paper," and I believe Capt. Modak will then be able to devote some time exclusively to this one topic and bring out a supplement to his present book.

Nothing can be more interesting than the constructive programme which Capt. Modak has designed and proposed at the end of his book. A part of that may possibly be in the hands of Indians themselves to carry out; but even in that respect limits of success are sure to be soon reached because they are very narrow. Military training and Military habits cannot be successfully fostered in the youth of any country, unless there is clearly before its eyes assured hope of a proud and glorious career in Military service. A Rifle Club and U. T. C. organization in a University cannot thrive and prosper, if it can be looked upon only as a sport and no necessary avenue to a Military career. But something is better than nothing; and it is upto the leaders of the coming generations to start even these clubs and

organizations, in the hope that a time may soon come, when all their accumulated service and spirit can be devoted and used at the proper time and in its proper place and when we may have something like freedom to adjust our own affairs.

I shall conclude with the expression of hope that the idea of an "All-India Defence League", put forward specifically by Capt. Modak, will be taken up by persons who are competent for the purpose, and enthusiastic in their temperament. Such leagues have done wonders in other countries, and there is no reason why similar results should not be achieved even in India in course of time.

POONA }
13-3-33 }

N. C. Kelkar

PREFACE

I have great pleasure in presenting to the public this study of the 'Indian Defence Problem.' The study by its very nature is not an intensive detailed study of annas and pies, but it merely records the general state of affairs in the language of figures. The remedy suggested is the British soldier's immediate replacement.

I may say, that I am presenting in the following pages, the results of a continuous study of over a score of years. My material was not always easy to obtain. The difficulties of satisfactorily deciphering the tangle of concealed screens were not few. I claim no high literary or journalistic abilities, and I am not sorry for that, as it was never my purpose to present a literary piece to divert the easy going elite of the "gentleman critic class", we meet in our life. My study is of a serious subject and seriously it is to be studied. Truth will bear presentation in any form, or even without one. I may assure, that the facts presented herein are based on first-rate authorities and will bear scrutiny even by the most unsympathetic critic. I hope, this attempt of mine induces more students (our I. B. Os) from Sandhurst to come forth, with their studies on this most vital and important question.

If there is anything more, that characterises the educated or the *intelligentsia* of the country and distinguishes them from classes elsewhere in the world, it is then utter ignorance in military matters. All this is due to that British policy of keeping the Indian *intelligentsia* out of the Army, by stamping them as Non-martial. The Army department never felt, that it existed in the

interests of the country (India), whom they pretend to serve, only with their lip-sympathy.

The result of all this policy has been to emasculate the population.

I have found it very convenient and helpful in my study—the Book—to adopt the ‘out of their mouths’ easy and safe method of presenting my arguments. It may perhaps be not quite appreciated by some, perhaps it may even act on some readers’ nerves; but my difficulties were so peculiar, and I felt that under these circumstances, in which I was unhappily placed, I could not have better expressed or even expressed equally so well, what the extracts by themselves do.

It is also probable that readers, who generally are not used to British frankness etc., may perhaps interpret many of the extracts to be too harsh, contemptuous, indecent or full of hatred and many other things; but my long association with the British officers have changed my angle of vision, and made me realize, that in those statements at least, the Britisher is the most frank, honest and candid person. [Some statements may have a tinge of hypocrisy, a few may have a double meaning for the sake of policy, some may show the diplomatic skill of the British writers, and yet, the majority of the extracts are nothing but the most perfectly frank, honest and candid opinions of Britishers.] It is possible, that the frankness at times may be found to be a shade deeper. The readers who have been under a demoralizing process of administration may perhaps think that, some of the extracts are indecent, but let them not think so. I again assure them, that the extracts, if they leave any mark at all on one, only convey an idea that the Britishers, whose extracts I

have taken are quite honest and frank in those statements at least—whatever those statements may be.

Similarly, I would request all readers not to misunderstand and misinterpret my frank and candid statements as disrespectful or anti-British. It is far from me and my mind. [I certainly am an admirer of some of those British methods and ways, which even after our long continuous association with Britishers, have not been completely copied and learnt by us. I would therefore wish, that they do not misunderstand me or stamp me as anti-British, although in my zeal, I may have shown myself as Pro-Indian; just as a Britisher always unmistakably imprints upon you the fact of his being Pro-British. It is just natural for every one to think so.]

Readers should kindly bear the fact in mind that all this compilation and printing etc., has been done in such a short time as ten to twelve weeks. They also have to remember that I had to do all this with many handicaps, as we say in the Army, Men, Money and Munitions,—so was it with me, in this attempt of mine.

I therefore, would wish that, this volume is looked upon, only as an informative mass of material, which I wanted to give them at the present moment when the country is so seriously considering the question of Defence—The Control of the Army and the Indianization—and the three safeguards.

It is common knowledge that certain reports of certain committees of British experts such as the Rawlinson MacMunn-Committee, were suppressed for years and years. Similarly, other reports such as the Skeen Committee's Subcommittee report also was suppressed; even the R. T. C. members could not get a copy; and

why? The question is natural. The answer is plain. The experts, though majority of them were British and the highest authorities on Army and Army policies, were at that stage unable to suppress certain facts and information.

But the civil authorities—the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India—who were not the Military experts, but who could wield their power like the great Moguls of White-hall, not only could suppress the report and recommendations, but could even throttle the very suggestions of these recommendations. It is exactly on this account, that we insist on having the control of the Army, the Defence Minister responsible to the legislatures and ultimately getting the 'Governor General's powers of Defence' transferred through the Defence Minister to a Defence Committee and legislatures.

The reader can thus easily imagine the very appalling reserve and secrecy that one meets everywhere, from places where one can naturally go in search of information. It appears, that it is not in the British interest,—let me state frankly—that my countrymen be educated in such subjects.

The study would reveal to the politician the ghastly inner side of the so-called fair army budgets of India. Their word, if it carries the weight of representative responsibility, let it also be weighty with the true knowledge of facts which may not otherwise be quite clear to them.

Let them think, how the British Army part of the Indian Army, is but an Army of occupation. The Indian Army is not a national army at all. Let them deeply ponder, how the present army situation in India tells adversely upon the character, man-hood etc.,

of the aspiring Indian youths. Let them digest the cumulative result of such a demoralising system.

A saving of 32 crores will be effected by Indianising the army without reducing its efficiency. A paltry sum of about 2 crores may be reserved for developing territorials, reserves and all other methods of securing cheap and economic Defence. Full 30 crores will thus be released for a number of Nation-building activities. All this could only be done, if the Indianization of the Army—the replacement of the British soldiers, as well as the officers—takes place.

Since, Defence is the concern of Indians, we ought to be prepared for Defence, and as such an 'All-India National Defence League,' similar to 'the National Defence League' in England, should be established to work up a General Programme to prepare ourselves adequately for the Defence of our country, in a larger measure and to a greater extent.

The present volume may perhaps claim to be the first attempt at a discussion of such a great National Question on the solid ground of political and historical facts. It is necessary that at the present juncture, when India is expecting to pass from one stage to another, when the *White Paper*—that is talked of, not so much by the majority of the Indian public, as by the Government block and others—we wish that our own people in trying to come to any conclusions on the Defence Question or the other safeguards question, should not ignore certain incontrovertible historical and political facts. It is, therefore, that all this material has been put before them in such a hurry. Many mistakes in spelling, corrections etc., have crept in, due to this haste. The co-operation of friends has reduced the number of mistakes, but it is also possible, that others have

escaped detection. I will be thankful, therefore, if my readers will bring to my notice the errors they come across.

I desire to acknowledge with deep gratitude the most valuable assistance given by my young friends and Brothers without which the book would not have seen the light of the day at all in such a short time as 10 to 12 weeks.

I am indebted to all those Authorities quoted in the book.

I am indebted to the members of the ' Servants of India Society ' and the library staff, for the kindness shown to me by according me an opportunity and all other facilities to carry on my studies in the Society, and its splendid library, where I was greatly helped by everybody. I am particularly indebted to all those members of the society and all other friends, who helped me in going through my notes—manuscript—and making me some helpful suggestions.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. S. R. Sardesai, my printer, for all the valuable help given. I cannot adequately express my feelings. I feel it is entirely due to his personal and brotherly help and feelings, that I was enabled to print this study of mine; otherwise I am doubtful whether it would have seen the light of day.

The workers in the press, who in spite of badly typed manuscript and the corrections at every stage of printing, have given me their willing help and co-operation, deserve my thanks.

My thanks are also due to numerous other friends who helped directly or indirectly in bringing out this volume.

There are also some friends, who would not permit me to acknowledge their help and express my gratefulness for all sorts of help rendered. I only, therefore, record my gratefulness to every one of them.

Servants of India
Society, Poona 4. }
21-3-33

G. V. Modak.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A. Branch—Adjutant General's Branch.
- Adjt.—Adjutant.
- Admi.—Administration.
- A. & O.—Administration and organization.
- A. H. Q.—Army Head Quarters.
- B. Os.—British Officers.
- B. O. Rs.—British other ranks.
- Br.—British.
- Cav.—Cavalry.
- C-in-C.—Commander in Chief.
- Col.—Colonel.
- Genl.—General.
- G. Branch—General Staff Branch.
- G. G.—Governor General.
- I. A. S. C.—Indian Army Supply Corps.
- I. B. Os.—Indian British officer.
- I. C. C.—Indian corps of clerks.
- I. D. S. M.—Indian Distinguished Service.
- I. H. C.—Indian Hospital corps.
- Ind.—Indian.
- Inf.—Infantry.
- I. O.—Indian Officer.
- I. O. Rs.—Indian other ranks.
- K. Cs.—King's commissions.
- L/Naik.—Lance Naik.
- Med.—Medical.
- Med. Art.—Medium Artillery.
- M. E. S.—Military Engineering Service.
- M. H.—Main Head.
- M. T.—Mechanical transport.
- O. R.—Other ranks.
- Ord.—Ordnance.
- Orga.—Organization.
- O. T. Cs.—Officers' training corps.
- P. S. C.—Passed Staff College.

- Q. Branch**—Quarter-master General Branch.
Qr.—Quarter-master.
Q. M. G.—Quarter-master General.
R. A. F.—Royal Air Force.
R. F. A.—Royal Field Artillery.
R. H. A.—Royal Horse Artillery.
R. M. A.—Royal Military Academy.
R. M. C.—Royal Military College.
Rmt. Depot.—Remount Depot.
R. Q. M. S.—Regimental Quarter-master Sergeant.
R. S. M.—Regimental Sergeant Major.
R. T. C. Ahmednagar.—Royal Tank corps—
S. A. S.—Small Arms Training School; Sub-assistant surgeon.
U. T. C.—University Training Corps.
N. C. Os.—Non-commissioned officers.
W. O.—Warrant officers.
V. Cs.—Viceroy's commission.

ERRATA

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201. Read, married soldier's allowance as 8 lacs.
209. Pay of ranks requires correction.
217. According to changes in new rates, some figures may change a little.
246. The Aux. and Terri. figure of 409 is not the personnel of clerks, but B. O. Rs. for training purposes. In the Auxiliary it is more than 350, and in Territorials about 35, and the rest in A. H. Q. Dist. and Commands etc.
247. Includes all B. O. R. Personnel in general; in the medical services, this figure cannot be included in this training table.
253. Figures in table—shown against Frontier Brigade, should be taken as Training and Depot Head figures, except the figure of 49 of 1926-27 in 1st column.
259. Ref. (a) is for the column (England 1926).
325. Table I, Read Soldier's Military Education Est. Cost.
335. Table VII, figure to item 6 has to be added, the same will have to be added in general total also.
337. Table VIII, read Education after children.
343. Table III, read the cost of Nurses in 1926 (India) as 8'73 Lacs; Read cost of medicine in 1926 as 54'05 instead of 54'5 Lacs; Read 'Other Items' cost in 1931-32 as lacs 61'70 instead of 74'53 Lacs.
345. Table V, Heading; read medical, after soldier.
359. Figures of Payment made to England, read 2,07,57,926, instead of 22,77,92,467; and read 48,66,75,000 for 48,67,50,000. Read 15,58,992 for unemployment Insurance and 5,32,267 for National Health Insurance.
384. 4th line from bottom, read 63'45 crores instead of 62'45.

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