



(c) crown copyright

*Mr. Langhurst*

Printed for the Cabinet. August 1921.

SECRET.

3

C.P. 3259.

THE CABINET.

REDUCTION OF THE INFANTRY OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

I DO not accept the description of my views when at the War Office as set forth by the Secretary of State for War in his Memorandum C.P. 3231. I should never have agreed to the destruction of live and well-recruited battalions of the Territorial Force for the sake of economies so exiguous compared to the total of Army Votes. Indeed, I consider the course pursued violates the undertaking which I gave that no live and well-recruited battalion of the old Territorial or Volunteer Forces should be extinguished.

It is, of course, difficult for a Minister to argue from the point of view of his own constituency. Neither has he the advantage of making a protest in the House. I trust, however, that my colleagues will not be misled into supposing that I consider the mutilation of the Territorial Force and the injury to local patriotism consequent thereupon is a right or necessary step. A careful examination of the Army Votes will show where the money goes and where large savings can alone be obtained. The extraordinary growth of all the administrative services, out of all proportion to the fighting troops, the maintenance of staffs on a scale wholly unrelated to pre-war standards, the addition of an extra company to every battalion, the retention of cavalry regiments and horse artillery batteries at their present strength, are examples of the directions in which the largest savings can be made now that the War Office has been relieved of the burden of Mesopotamia.

I trust that the Cabinet will have an opportunity in the autumn of considering army policy from a general and not merely from a financial point of view. It has always been the practice in the past to consult the Cabinet on changes in the structure and system of the Army, and I am certainly of opinion that this practice should not be abandoned in favour of purely departmental decisions between the War Office and the Treasury.

W. S. C.

*Colonial Office, August 28, 1921.*