

92. *Beaulieu River (Solent)*.—This site is situated on the Solent about 15 miles south-west of Southampton, and includes the land on which Lepe Coast Guard Station now stands. The land which it is thought would be a suitable site for a Boys' Training Establishment, forms part of the estate of Mr. H. W. Forster, M.P. The whole of the property amounting to some 2,000 acres is for sale in one lot with the exception of the land on the water front, the reserve price being understood to be 60,000*l*. No negotiations have yet been entered into for the purchase of the area which might be required. If, however, the owner's present objections to dividing the property could be overcome, it is thought that the area needed for Admiralty purposes should be obtained at a reasonable price.

93. The following notes are based on the general requirements indicated in paragraph 80 :—

- (1) The distance by sea from Portsmouth is about 12 miles.
- (2) The site is close to sheltered water, which offers exceptional facilities for boat work, but owing to the mud bank (Beaulieu Spit), it would be necessary to erect a pier as at Trevol. Some dredging would be required, and the Director of Works considers that this might have to be continuous. There is approximately 3 feet of water on the bar at the entrance to the river at low spring tides.
- (3) As the R.N. Hospital, Haslar, is about 12 miles distant by sea, it would be necessary to provide Sick Quarters with more ample accommodation than at Trevol or Ernesettle, and also an Infectious Hospital.
- (4) The nearest Railway Station (Beaulieu Road) and the nearest large town (Southampton, *via* Hythe Ferry) are both about 9 miles distant. The roads are good. It might be necessary to provide a motor service for the transport of recruits joining *via* Southampton and for drafts of boys leaving the Establishment. It would also be desirable to establish a small depôt at Southampton, possibly under the charge of the R.M. Recruiting Staff Officer, to facilitate forwarding recruits sent from the various Recruiting Districts. The transport of stores, &c. could be arranged by water.
- (5) The Barracks could be erected with a southern aspect. The soil is understood to be partly clay and partly gravel, the subsoil being of a clay nature. There was no sign of sponginess or waterlogging after heavy rain, and credible evidence was given that the ground dried up quickly. Drainage could apparently be arranged without difficulty. The position is isolated and there is little prospect, owing to the distance from the railway, of the Barracks being eventually surrounded by other property.
- (6) The proposed site comprises an area of about 90 acres of suitable land which admits of the economical preparation of recreation grounds.
- (7) Water for all purposes is at present obtained from wells sunk in convenient positions and the supplies are stated to be plentiful and of good quality. The well water at Lepe Coastguard Station was analysed recently and found to be satisfactory, and there is no record of this source ever having failed. The Southampton Water Company's Mains are now laid to Hythe, 6 miles distant, but the Company are proposing to make an extension to Fawley, 3 to 4 miles distant, and possibly arrangements could be made, if desired, for a further extension to Lepe.
- (8) The situation from a recruiting point of view is well placed as regards the southern counties, and convenient transit for recruits *via* Southampton is practicable.
- (9) The climate is reported to be somewhat relaxing, but not more so than at Plymouth. The general health of the residents is stated to be satisfactory.

94. It was contemplated that the Barracks might be erected on the land on which Lepe Coastguard Station now stands, with frontage close to the water, and about 25 feet above high water level. In this case the recreation grounds would comprise fields lying to the north of the barracks, but owing to the presence of some

*Fulcrum*

marshy ground a causeway between the Barracks and the fields would be necessary. In order to carry out this scheme, it is thought that negotiations might be entered into for the acquisition of Lepe House and part of the grounds, the former being used as accommodation for Ward-room Officers.

95. The Director of Works in his preliminary report (Appendix No. 12) states that the adoption of this scheme would result in the site being crowded, and suggests an alternative scheme. This scheme, however, contemplates the buildings being erected on a site over half a mile from the foreshore, involving the loss of many of the advantages offered by the site suggested by the Committee. A further report by the Director of Works (Appendix No. 12) shows that if the Sick Quarters, Swimming Bath, Gymnasium, &c., were moved elsewhere, it would be practicable to erect the main buildings on the site suggested by the Committee close to the foreshore. Alternatively, the acquisition of a few more acres of land (if practicable) to the westward of this site, would effect the same purpose. We strongly commend the adoption of one of these alternatives in preference to the proposal of the Director of Works in view of the many advantages which would be gained by erecting the Barracks in a commanding and convenient position close to the foreshore.

96. Particulars of this site have been procured in such a way as to avoid prejudicing future negotiations. It is not practicable to give a close estimate of the cost of the land. The adoption of the Committee's scheme would necessitate the demolition of Lepe Coastguard cottages and the provision of a new Station (if required).

97. The approximate cost of the scheme is stated by the Director of Works to be 230,000*l.*, exclusive of the cost of land (which might be from 10,000*l.* to 20,000*l.*) replacing Lepe Coastguard Station and dredging.

The time required for preparing an establishment at Beaulieu would be from 2½ to 3 years, as at Ernesettle.