

THE
NAVAL SERVICE
of CANADA

Its Official History



VOLUME I
ORIGINS AND EARLY YEARS

by

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CHAPTER 6

THE NAVAL SERVICE ACT

THE grave warnings of danger which were voiced in the British House of Commons on March 16, 1909, had wide repercussions. Large sections of the public in the Dominions and colonies accepted these warnings at their face value, and the traditional reluctance of Canadians to spend money upon naval defence gave way before this strong wind from the outer world.¹ The Canadian press reflected various points of view concerning the lesson to be drawn from the speeches in London; but the majority of the newspapers which have been consulted felt that some positive action should be taken. For example, some of them did not allude to what the British Ministers had said, while *L'Action Sociale*, and *Le Nationaliste* of Montreal, were strongly against the adoption of any naval policy. *Le Temps* of Ottawa considered it unnecessary for Canada to contribute Dreadnoughts in order to prove its loyalty to Great Britain, or to convince Germany of that loyalty, and favoured the creation of a Canadian navy. The *Halifax Chronicle* felt that while Canada was willing to assist the Mother Country to the full extent of her resources, consistent with her autonomous status, "the sober people of the Dominion are not going to be swept off their feet by the clamor and hysteria of the Toronto crowd of warriors." Both the *Victoria Colonist* and the *Vancouver Daily News Advertiser*, while making no specific suggestions felt that the Dominion should do something to help. The *Toronto Globe* stated on March 23 that the time had arrived when every member of the British family should aid in dissipating any doubts concerning Britain's position as mistress of the seas, and claimed that the danger was real. The next day it expressed the opinion that Canada should provide herself with Dreadnoughts, and that these should remain under Canadian control. The *Manitoba*

¹ It is probable, however, that had Canada been an independent republic she would have furnished herself with a naval force of some kind during the opening years of this century. Naval reference books published in that period have much to say of the policies and programmes of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Greece, Norway, and other small States. In 1911 even Cuba was planning to have some cruisers and a gunboat built.

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Free Press reported the First Lord's speech in a detached manner; but on March 27, in a front-page editorial, it urged that as an exceptional act to meet an exceptional situation, and not as a permanent policy, some Dreadnoughts should be given to Great Britain.

The views expressed in Parliament were similar on the whole to those of the press. Earlier in the session at Ottawa, before the debate on the naval Estimates had taken place in London, the Hon. George Foster, Member for North Toronto and one of the most prominent Conservatives in public life, had given notice of a resolution calling for measures by Canada to defend her coasts. He had been obliged to delay its introduction for two months, because of opposition from F. D. Monk and others within his own Party.² On March 29, 1909, however, a fortnight after the speeches had been delivered at Westminster, Foster introduced his resolution:

That in the opinion of this House, in view of her great and varied resources, of her geographical position and national environments, and of that spirit of self-help and self-respect which alone befits a strong and growing people, Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibility and financial burden incident to the suitable protection of her exposed coast line and great seaports.³

In support of the resolution Foster said that it was not conceived in any party spirit, and hoped that "those questions that concern national defence and Imperial obligations may be kept as far outside of party politics and party contention as they are in Great Britain." He assured the House that for a good many years he had been impressed with the need of facing the question involved in his resolution, that difficulties are not mitigated by avoiding them, and that the time had now come when the Parliament and people of Canada should consider whether or not they had any duties, and if so what those duties were, in regard to the defence of their common heritage. He sympathized with those who declared war and its burdens to be almost intolerable; nevertheless physical force lay at the foundation of all our progress and civilization. Canada had come to occupy an important position in the world: she could neither escape the common burden, nor ignore the common responsibility, and he did not think that she wished to do either. She had immense resources and interests to defend in an insecure world. Her great seaports had no defence, even

² Skelton, *Life of Laurier*, II, p. 321.

³ It will be noted that the Foster resolution did not go beyond the idea of coast defence.

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against a third-class cruiser, and when compared with other overseas possessions in naval matters, the Dominion stood silent and ashamed. Reliance upon the Monroe Doctrine would be degrading and unworthy. Canadians must prepare to defend themselves, either by themselves or in co-operation with Great Britain.

In Foster's opinion, two possible policies presented themselves—a contribution of money or ships to the Admiralty, or assumption by Canadians of the defence of their own ports and coasts in constant and free co-operation with the forces of the United Kingdom. The first of these policies would in any case amount to a contribution of money, because even if one or two Dreadnoughts were given, they could not be built in Canada. He felt that this policy was open to the objections that the fixing and occasional revision of the amount of a contribution might lead to disagreement and unpleasantness; that it looked too much like hiring someone else to do what Canadians themselves ought to do; and that a defence of that sort would provide no inspiration, and strike no roots in the soil of Canada. The Dominion would have its own naval force sooner or later; and it might well be the greater wisdom to sow the seed at once and cultivate its growth. Foster therefore preferred the second policy, the creation of a naval force owned by the Dominion, and gradually Canadianized to the point where there might some day be "a Canadian admiral on the Canadian coast." The final result would be an imperial adjunct to the Royal Navy for the defence of the Dominion and of the Empire, in which Canada would have "some of her body, her bones, her blood, and her mental power, her national pride." The destiny of the Dominion might well be as great on the sea as on the land, and its resources for the support of sea power were large and varied. Foster also pointed out that Australia, after having tried the contributory method, had adopted the policy which he was advocating. "I do not know which of these forms our aid will take after due care and consideration but whichever form is chosen, one thing is certain, that something ought to be done—and done now." He added that some extraordinary and pressing danger might arise, or might even have already arisen, which would require to be met by special means that would lie outside the normal and settled policy:

Let me say to my right honourable friend that if, after careful consideration, he proposes to this parliament a means for meeting that emergency adequately, by the gift of Dreadnoughts or the gift of money, this side of

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the House will stand beside him in thus vindicating Canada's honour and strengthening the empire's defence.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister, replying, began by saying that: "to the eloquent and able observations with which the House has just been favoured . . . very little exception, if any, can be taken by anyone and certainly not by myself." He objected that Foster's policy had not been stated explicitly enough, and denied the truth of any implication in the resolution that Canada had been remiss in the duty of providing for her own defence or for that of the Empire. The country would not be stampeded by any hasty or feverish action, however spectacular, but would calmly and deliberately consider its position. He agreed with Foster that the problem should be approached not only from the Canadian point of view, but also from that of the Empire at large. "Today the British Empire is composed of a galaxy of young nations proud of their allegiance to the British Crown and proud also of their own local independence." The question of contribution was as old as Confederation, and had presented itself in a concrete form at the Imperial Conference of 1902. The Canadian policy, however, had always been not to undertake to contribute. Laurier went on to say that: "at present there is a passing wave in which we can trace anger, enthusiasm and fear, and which directed and pushed us to depart from our policy and contribute at once to the British Navy." He wished them to understand that this was not the way in which, in the past, they had understood their duty:

The real question is one of control. The problem before us is the association of our small naval strength with the great organization of fleets of the mother country, so as to secure the highest efficiency and unity without sacrificing our right to the constitutional control of our own funds, and of any flotilla built and maintained at our own cost.

Laurier quoted Lord Milner and Sir Charles Tupper in opposition to contributions for naval purposes, and claimed that a great deal had already been done for defence.

In the development of naval defences, however, he admitted that the country had fallen behind. "Engaged as we have been in the works of peace, we have delayed and put off the development of our navy." This task, he said, would be undertaken without delay:

We should consult with the naval authorities of the British Government, as my honourable colleague the Minister of Militia has done with the council of defence in London; and after having organized a plan, we should carry it out in Canada with our own resources and out of our own money. This is the policy which commends itself to the government.



Sir Wilfrid Laurier

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As to an emergency contribution of a Dreadnought, Laurier said that he did not consider the danger to be imminent, and that the British nation, at all events, was not greatly alarmed. He added:

. . . that if the day should come when the supremacy of Britain on the high seas will be challenged, it will be the duty of all the daughters of the nation to close around the old mother land and make a rampart around her to ward off any attack. I hope that day will never come, but should it come, I would deem it my duty to devote what might be left of my life and energy to stump the country and endeavour to impress upon my fellow-countrymen, especially my compatriots in the province of Quebec, the conviction that the salvation of England is the salvation of our own country that therein lies the guarantee of our civil and religious freedom and everything we value in this life. Those are the sentiments which animate the government on this occasion.

In place of the Foster resolution Laurier offered one of his own, which began by stating that: "This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence." It stated further that under the present constitutional relations between Great Britain and the Dominions, any contribution to the British treasury for naval and military purposes would not, as far as Canada was concerned, satisfactorily solve the problem of defence. The core of the resolution was contained in the following paragraph:

The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the admiralty at the last Imperial Conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the empire and the peace of the world.

The resolution ended by expressing a firm conviction that should the need arise the Canadian people would be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice required in order to give to the imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in maintaining the integrity and honour of the Empire.

R. L. Borden, the Leader of the Opposition, claimed to be as strong a champion of Canadian autonomy as anyone in the House, adding that national status implied national responsibility. He considered that too large a proportion of Canada's national expenditure for defence in the past had been for land defence; and that not less than half the total should be devoted to naval purposes, inasmuch as the great external markets of

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the Dominion lay overseas and access to them could be assured only by naval forces. Also at least fifty Canadian cities, according to Borden, would be open to attack in time of war by a hostile light cruiser. He went on to say that:

In so far as my right honourable friend the Prime Minister to-day outlined the lines of naval defence of this country I am entirely at one with him. I am entirely of opinion, in the first place, that the proper line upon which we should proceed in that regard is the line of having a Canadian naval force of our own. I entirely believe in that.

Borden said that Australia had given up contributing to an Australian squadron of the Royal Navy because Great Britain had wanted the field of operations of that squadron extended to the China and Indian seas. The new Australian policy of acquiring a flotilla of small vessels would provide a force which it would be difficult or impossible to send across the seas. In thus protecting themselves, however, the Australians were providing the best possible force for the protection of the Empire as well. Borden said that he accordingly agreed with the Prime Minister in opposing a policy of contributions, and that Parliament should control, in the main at least, the expenditure of any money which it might vote for naval purposes.

The people of Canada, Borden went on, unanimously wish to be in and of the Empire, a status which bore with it an obligation to assume a fair share in defending by sea the Empire and particularly their own coasts. He expressed a strong desire that the policy of Canada on that great question should be unanimously approved by Parliament and the country. Laurier's resolution was criticized on the ground that it told Great Britain and the world what Canada was not prepared to do, instead of confining itself to stating what she would willingly do. Borden also objected to the statement in the resolution that any naval contribution was out of the question, expressing the opinion, as Foster had done, that the day might come, perhaps very soon, "when the only thing we could do in the absence of preparation in this country would be to make some kind of contribution." The inclusion of some word which would indicate an intention to act promptly was also urged.⁴

⁴ According to Borden, in the original phrase "the organization of a Canadian naval service", he wanted to insert the word "immediate" before the word "organization". After a private discussion with Laurier the word "speedy" was agreed upon. (Borden to L. J. Maxse, May 10, 1909, Borden Papers, Annex to Memoir Notes No. 3).

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During the rest of the debate, those who opposed any naval policy and those who were hesitant suggested that Canada had already done much for Great Britain, by providing homes for her surplus people, by supporting her in the South African War, and in other ways. It was stated also that the Royal Navy was far ahead of its rivals, and likely to remain so. A fear of becoming involved in militarism was also expressed. One speaker said that the Dominion was far too busily engaged in doing other things to spend millions on naval defence, and wanted money spent instead on a canal to the Georgian Bay. The army was described as Canada's best protection. One speaker called Foster a high priest of pessimism, wondered why Germany and Great Britain, the two most advanced nations on earth, should fight each other, and thought that any possible danger to Canada could best be met by training young men in discipline, physical exercise, and the use of the rifle.

As the attitude of the leaders had foreshadowed, a large majority of those who spoke in this debate favoured the adoption of a naval policy and wanted a Canadian navy; though some of them, following Foster and Borden, were willing to consider a contribution should a serious emergency arise. The existing position of the country with regard to naval defence was described as humiliating. It was also suggested that any naval policy which might be adopted should be carried out in such a way as to develop the iron, steel, and shipbuilding industries of the Dominion, and one Member said that dry docks were badly needed. Another Member thought that Great Britain should dispose of some dry docks to Canada. No one suggested an immediate contribution either of money or of Dreadnoughts.

Laurier concluded the debate by reintroducing his resolution, amended so as to meet all of Borden's objections, and thus revised it was passed unanimously. The revised resolution was as follows:

That this House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence.

The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the mother country and the self-governing dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence.

The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in

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co-operation with and in close relation to the imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the admiralty at the last imperial conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the empire and the peace of the world.

The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the empire.⁵

Throughout the most important debate in the whole story of Canadian naval policy, a remarkable degree of harmony had prevailed, because public opinion was on the whole ready to accept a naval policy, and also because, the issue being in a sense brand new, Party commitments binding the faithful were few and weak. The Foster resolution, moreover, merely stated a general principle, and Laurier's, in both its forms, contained much that appealed to imperialists and autonomists alike. Moreover there seems to have been a genuine and wide-spread desire to keep the country's naval policy clear of controversy as far as possible. When the Members left the House that night, Canada had abandoned the practice which she had followed ever since Confederation of having no naval policy at all. Both Parties had accepted in the most general form a naval policy which proved to be permanent. That it had received from the House of Commons a unanimous endorsement, moreover, promised well for its future.

In Parliament Laurier had achieved a really extraordinary success, with Borden's help, in obtaining acceptance for his policy of compromise on this question so heavily charged with political explosives. In the country at large also, the amended resolution had the support of the greater part of the press, and probably of a majority among the people; but many were opposed, and their attitude was revealed without delay. As is usual with compromises, this one received its support from a large and composite middle group, while it was attacked from both the extremes. It was too imperialist for some, while for others it was not imperialist enough. There were also those who objected to it on the ground that it would mean unnecessary expense, and still others who did so on pacifist grounds. Coming events immediately began to cast their shadows. The *Mail and Empire* of Toronto asked whether a moment when there was great and immediate need to uphold

⁵ Debate in *House of Commons Debates*, 1909, II, pp. 3484-564.

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Britain's hands was the time to choose for "prating about Canada's autonomy"?⁶ The *Globe* reported that the governments of Manitoba and Ontario had practically agreed to contribute a Dreadnought to the Royal Navy, and that the governments of New Brunswick and British Columbia were interested as well.⁷

At the opposite side of the sky two clouds appeared at this time. Quebec Conservatives, following the lead of Monk, refused to march with the Party on this question. At the same time Mr. Bourassa began a violent campaign in the same Province against the resolution, and against Laurier for having sponsored it. Monk and Mr. Bourassa, largely on the same grounds, attacked the agreement of 1909, and were later to attack the Naval Service Bill and the emergency contribution policy.

Frederick Debartzch Monk, born in Montreal in 1856, had formerly led the Conservative Party in Quebec. He was by nature exceedingly reserved, and his acquaintances seem to have found him difficult to understand. A scrupulous integrity, which found even the necessary and justifiable compromises of public life difficult to accept, was combined in Monk with considerable ability. His political ideals included a strong sense of nationalism.

Mr. Henri Bourassa was born in Montreal in 1868. A descendant of Louis-Joseph Papineau, he spent some years at his ancestor's seigniorship of Montebello, and became mayor of Montebello at the age of twenty-two. Six years later he entered the federal Parliament as a Liberal. He resigned his seat in protest against the participation of Canada in the South African War, which, he contended, involved a fundamental change in the relation of the Dominion with Great Britain, upon which the people of Canada should be thoroughly enlightened and directly consulted. He was re-elected by acclamation. Mr. Bourassa broke with Laurier again in 1905 and became the leader of the *Nationaliste* group in Quebec. When the naval question came to the fore in 1909 and 1910, he resolutely opposed the adopting of any positive naval policy, unless the people should have first been consulted. An original thinker, and a brilliant orator and writer, fiery, full of courage, and uncompromising, he always travelled the road of his own individual choice.

⁶ *Mail and Empire*, Mar. 31, 1909.

⁷ *Globe*, Mar. 31, 1909.

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Among the Laurier Papers in the Dominion Archives there are a large number of letters and resolutions on the subject of naval policy which were addressed to Laurier during the spring and summer of 1909. Those written in March and April almost unanimously advocated some form of contribution—one or more battleships, or less specifically some sort of immediate and effective support for the Royal Navy. Later the sense of these communications changed, and the Prime Minister began to receive a stream of letters which opposed any contribution, and most of which also ran counter to any naval expenditure at all. Two or three of them even said that rebellion would result if money were squandered on a navy. A number of these later letters suggested that before anything more was done a plebiscite should be held. In July Laurier received a collect cable suggesting that the Dominion should pay the interest on a loan raised for the purpose of building ships for the Royal Navy. To many of the later letters Laurier sent the same reply, of which the following is an extract:

I can assure you that I am no more in sympathy than you are with militarism in any form, but the question of defence is one which cannot be altogether overlooked. It is the penalty of becoming a nation and which all nations have to bear and which, in course of time, I hope they may dispense with.

Unfortunately our standard of civilization is not yet high enough for that ideal. I have no more intention today than I ever had of being drawn into what I once defined as 'the vortex of European militarism'. The nations of Europe are spending at least fifty per cent of their revenue on military armaments, both on land and sea; it would be a crime for us to attempt anything of the kind, but if our revenue this year is ninety millions, and it will be above that figure, an expenditure of two or three millions, which would mean two or three per cent, seems to me a very light burden.⁸

The aroused interest in naval defence in the Dominions and self-governing colonies led the British Government to suggest, at the end of April 1909, that a subsidiary imperial conference should be held. In June the Australian Government offered to contribute a Dreadnought or its equivalent to the Royal Navy. New Zealand had already offered one and if necessary two Dreadnoughts, and the governments of New South Wales and Victoria had undertaken to share the cost of contributing one should the Commonwealth Government not do so. At the

⁸ The correspondence referred to in this paragraph is in the Laurier Papers, Contribution by Canada to British Navy "Dreadnought", Pub. Arch., EE2, No. 4663. The cable suggesting payment of interest on a loan is dated July 29, 1909, and marked: "Collect 210 words. Cost \$26.25 if accepted." It has not been possible to obtain access to the relevant Laurier Papers, except for the rather unrewarding collection in the Public Archives.

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conference, which was held from July 29 to August 19, the Admiralty accepted the principle of Dominion naval forces.

In the fall, as the new session of Parliament approached, naval policy attracted more attention, and it became evident that the Conservative Party was seriously divided on the question. Among the outstanding leaders, Roblin, McBride, Rogers, Hazen, Haultain and others, were opposing a "tin-pot navy", and wanted some form of contribution, permanent or otherwise, and a large section of the press supported them.⁹ On the other hand, Monk and the Conservative newspapers in Quebec were openly attacking both any sort of contribution and any form of Canadian navy, and were demanding that before so grave a decision was taken the people should be consulted. From Sir Charles Tupper in England came an elder statesman's blessing on the policy of the March resolution:

Regarding as I do British Institutions as giving greater security to life, property and liberty than any other form of government I have devoted more than half a century to unceasing efforts to preserve the connection of Canada and the Crown. When Great Britain was involved in the struggle in the Transvaal I led the van in forcing the Canadian Government to send aid. But I did not believe then and I do not believe now in taxation without representation. The demand which will soon be made by some that Canada should contribute to the Imperial Navy in proportion to population I regard as preposterous, and dangerous.

I read with pleasure the resolution passed unanimously by the House of Commons which pledged Parliament to proceed vigorously with the construction of the Canadian Navy and to support England in every emergency, and all that in my opinion is required is to hold the Government of the day bound to carry that out honestly

Under existing circumstances it was of immense importance to have Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his party committed to the policy which secured the unanimous consent of the House of Commons on a question of such vital importance and a great responsibility will rest upon those who disturb that compact.¹⁰

In each of two Ontario villages at this time a letter was written to the Prime Minister. One, addressed to "Premier Laurier", ended with the words: "I know that there will be great pressure brought to bear, but sir, in the name of God, I pray You to protect our homes from the taxes, needed for such useless ornaments." The second was:

⁹ Skelton, *Life of Laurier*, II, p. 324; *Borden Memoirs*, I, p. 249.

¹⁰ Sir Charles Tupper to Borden, Nov. 20, 1909, Borden Papers, Annex to Memoir Notes No. 3.

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Dear Sir:

I thought I would write you a few lines in regard to the proposed Navy.

I have been a supporter of your party all my life time; and if you allow this thing to go through without taking a vote of the people you will certainly [*sic*] lose your head.

Yours truly

Earlier in the year Laurier had received a note warning him not to let the naval bill pass, and signed "*La Main Noire*."¹¹

The session of 1909-10 opened on November 11, and the Address proposed, among other things, to establish a Canadian naval Service. Many Conservatives still favoured a contribution, while Monk and Mr. Bourassa continued to campaign in Quebec against contribution and Canadian navy alike. Both Parties had split themselves on this adamant issue; the Conservatives, however, much more seriously than their opponents. The Naval Service Bill was introduced by Laurier, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries¹² being ill, on January 12, 1910. The Prime Minister mentioned the two programmes that the Admiralty had furnished, by request, at the imperial conference of the previous summer. The cheaper one, to cost \$2,000,000 a year, would consist of seven warships; the other, involving an expenditure of \$3,000,000 annually, called for eleven ships—four Bristols, a Boadicea, and six destroyers. "We have determined", Laurier said, "to accept the second proposition, that is to say, the larger one of 11 ships." He stated that the Admiralty had suggested destroyers of the river class on account of their sea-keeping qualities, and that the ships would be built in Canada, if possible, in spite of the fact that the cost of local construction would be at least a third greater.

Borden agreed that it was desirable to establish a naval force, which he preferred to speak of as a Canadian unit of the British or imperial navy. It had been urged, with some force, that Canada could not properly take a permanent part in the naval defence of the Empire without having some voice as to the wars which Great Britain might undertake; but he did not believe that Britain would engage in any great war without having first consulted the Dominions. This would provide the necessary share in directing policy. A Dominion navy he considered as no more likely than was the militia to erode the

¹¹ Letters dated Nov. 17 and 18, 1909, and Mar. 14, 1910, Laurier Papers, Pub. Arch., EE2, No. 4663.

¹² Louis Philippe Brodeur (1862-1924), Member for Rouville, P.Q., Minister of Marine and Fisheries who had been at the head of that Department since 1906.

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imperial connection. Concerning annual contributions Borden said:

. . . from the strategical point of view, I would be inclined to agree with the view of the admiralty that this would be the best way for the great self-governing dominions of the empire to make the contributions. But, Sir, from a constitutional and political standpoint, I am opposed to it, for many reasons. In the first place, I do not believe that it would endure. In the second place, it would be a source of friction . . . Permanent co-operation in defence, in my opinion, can only be accomplished by the use of our own material, the employment of our own people, the development and utilization of our own skill and resourcefulness, and above all by impressing upon the people a sense of responsibility for their share in international affairs.

Borden went on to say, however, that a contribution for the purpose of meeting an emergency would be fully justified and desirable. The government's proposals were entirely inadequate, being either too much or too little. They were too much for carrying on experiments in the organization of a Canadian naval Service, and too little for immediate and effective aid. The speediest organization would not make a Canadian Service effective in less than ten years. Indeed fifteen or twenty years would probably be required; "and the crisis, if a crisis is to be apprehended, will come and probably within three years." Borden had visited Great Britain the previous summer, where he had seen the fleet gathered for review by the King. He described the scene, adding that:

. . . it was not a proud thought for a Canadian surveying that mighty fleet to remember that all the protecting power which it embodied was paid for without the contribution of a single dollar by the Canadian people, although Canada and every Canadian throughout the world had the right to invoke and the just expectation to receive the protection afforded by that great armament.

The rapid growth of the German Navy, in Borden's opinion, was a most serious threat to the naval supremacy of Great Britain, which in turn was "absolutely essential to the integrity of the empire . . ." The moment of imminent danger had not actually arrived, but was fast approaching. "No one pretends that the British navy is not supreme to-day, but the continuance of that supremacy will cease within the next two or three years at least, unless extraordinary efforts are made by the mother country and all the great dominions." Borden ended by advocating the provision of a fleet unit, or else of one Dreadnought; or, what would be the best course of all, "the equivalent in cash at the disposal of the Admiralty to be used for naval defence under such conditions as we may prescribe." He moved an amendment in this sense.

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The bill came up for its second reading on February 3, 1910, and the debate was continued on a number of later days between that date and April 20. In the Minister's continued absence the Prime Minister led off again. He criticized:

. . . those who within the [Conservative] party boast of their imperialism, who carry abroad upon their foreheads the imperial phylacteries, who boldly walk into the temple and there loudly thank the Lord that they are not like other British subjects, that they give tithes of everything they possess, and that in them alone is to be found the true incense of loyalty.

He twitted the Conservatives with their disunity in regard to naval policy, and claimed that he himself was "a Canadian, first, last and all the time." Laurier went on to say that "this idea of contribution seems to me repugnant to the genius of our British institutions; it smacks too much of tribute to be acceptable by British communities." He quoted Lord Milner to the effect that local navies would be the best solution from the imperial point of view.¹³ It was in the course of this speech that Laurier used the following words, which were very often quoted or referred to afterwards:

If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say that we shall always be attacked, neither do I say that we would take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be determined by circumstances, upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce and will have to decide in its own best judgment.¹⁴

The next speaker was Borden, who objected to the authority which the bill would confer by implication on the government to withhold Canadian warships from imperial service in time of war. He wanted unity of organization and of action specified, and protested that neither immediate and effective aid for the Empire, nor satisfactory results for Canada, were promised by the bill. No permanent policy should be adopted without consulting the people. Meanwhile he asked for a contribution of money "to purchase or construct two battle-ships or armoured cruisers of the latest Dreadnought type", and that these ships should be placed at the disposal of the

¹³ Milner, the chief of the contemporary apostles of imperialism, in a speech given before the Canadian Club in Toronto on Oct. 27, 1908, had favoured Dominion navies rather than contributions to the Royal Navy, provided that whatever the Dominions did was done for the Empire as a whole and not for themselves only.

¹⁴ Laurier later explained his position on this point more fully in the course of a speech in Montreal on Oct 10, 1910: When Britain was at war, Canada was at war because of her relation to the British Crown. Canada would defend her territory if it were attacked. If Britain were at war Canada, if not attacked, would not take part unless she should judge it advisable to do so. If there should be a war endangering the naval supremacy of the Empire, he believed that it would be Canada's duty to aid Great Britain with all her strength. (*Pub. Arch. Pamph. Cat.*, II, No. 3712, pp. 35 and 44).

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British Government. Monk followed Borden with a very able speech in which he said that a contribution and a local navy would amount to the same thing. Pure and simple defence of Canada would be all right; but the government's policy would tie the Dominion tightly to the foreign policy of the British Government, and create a commitment to fight in all Britain's wars. "Most important of all, we have no voice of any kind in the conduct of imperial affairs, while being bound by imperial obligations towards foreign countries." The policy embodied in the bill would tend to destroy Canadian self-government. Monk moved an amendment to the effect that the House, declaring its unalterable devotion to the Crown, considered that the bill would alter the relations of Canada with the rest of the Empire, and ought therefore to be submitted to the Canadian people by means of a plebiscite.

Later speakers on behalf of the Naval Service Bill argued that Canada should cease to depend on the Royal Navy and the Monroe Doctrine, and that the proposed navy would increase Canada's prestige among the nations, and would tend to stimulate business at home and create new openings for trade abroad. It was also urged that the projected outlay was much smaller than it would have had to be if Canada had been an independent State. The Leader of the Opposition was accused of having agreed with the resolution of March 1909, and then turned around and advocated a different policy. From the Opposition back benches it was claimed that the fate of Canada would not be decided off the east coast but in the North Sea. Cruisers and destroyers were too small and weak, and a dismaying picture was drawn of little Canadian cruisers sailing out against the German Dreadnoughts while the whole world laughed. It was also asserted that a contribution to the Royal Navy would provide the most fighting power for the least money, and that most of the arguments against an emergency contribution were only applicable to a policy of permanent contributions. A third group of speakers were more or less opposed to any positive naval policy. From among these came the arguments that the best preparation for war was to husband one's resources in time of peace, and that the people of Great Britain were accustomed to having a scare every few years. The "frontier" point of view that a sturdy and resourceful citizenry would look after an enemy when the time came, was also expressed, as was the pacifist opinion that any naval expenditure would result in a tendency towards militarism.

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One speaker thought that the possibilities of "air-ships" should be investigated, and that Canadians ought to be encouraged in air activities which might mean more to the country in the near future than a whole fleet of small cruisers or even of Dreadnoughts.¹⁵

The point of view concerning the bill which Mr. Bourassa had been putting before the people of Quebec, was expounded in a speech that he had made on January 20, 1910, in Montreal:

Comme toutes les lois organiques ce projet affecte à la fois le budget et la constitution. D'une part, il sera la source de dépenses considérables; de l'autre, il modifie profondément notre situation politique dans nos rapports avec la mère-patrie, et plus tard nos relations avec les pays étrangers . . .

S' imagine-t-on le gouvernement belge soumettant au parlement de Bruxelles un texte de loi qui l'autorise, en cas de guerre, d'invasion ou d'insurrection dans toutes les possessions françaises, à mettre l'armée belge au service de la république française et qui donne au ministre de la guerre, à Paris, à compter du moment de la mobilization, le commandement des forces belges.

He said that between 1812 and 1907 Great Britain had been engaged in twenty-four wars, but that Canada was not likely to be attacked by any foreign country.

Referring to the proposed naval force, Mr. Bourassa complained that:

Au lieu d'une marine canadienne, sous l'autorité du gouvernement canadien, pour la défense du Canada, il [Laurier] nous gratifiait de deux escadres, organisées et payées par le peuple du Canada; mises en cas de guerre sous l'autorité exclusive de l'amirauté anglaise, pour prendre part à toutes les guerres de l'Angleterre.

Co-operation with the Royal Navy, he charged, had been implied by Laurier when he had stated in Parliament that the river-type destroyers had been chosen on account of their sea-keeping qualities, and that the Bristols had been selected partly for the same reason. The purpose of this proposed naval force, therefore, was not to defend the ports, commerce, and coasts of Canada, but to replace the squadrons which the Admiralty had withdrawn a few years before. He did not want control by the Admiralty in time of war:

Sans doute, en temps de paix le Canada garde la direction de sa flotte; mais, je vous le demande, une marine de guerre est-elle faite pour la paix ou pour la guerre?

¹⁵ The debates on the Naval Service Bill are to be found scattered through the following pages of *House of Commons Debates 1909-10*: I, pp. 1732-76; II, pp. 2952-4698; III, pp. 4848-5195; IV, pp. 6509-7294; V, pp. 7393-592.

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In spite of what Borden had said, Mr. Bourassa went on, Britain would not in any predictable future consult the larger colonies concerning foreign policy. He considered the so-called German peril to be largely a bugbear. Imperial unification was undesirable from every point of view, and Canada was not responsible for the international mess in which Great Britain had got herself involved. To the argument that Britain was heavily taxed in order to provide naval defence for the Empire, including Canada, his reply was that "l'Angleterre doit conserver les mers ouvertes pour recevoir son pain quotidien." British protection was an illusion; the only possible enemy being the United States, against whom Great Britain could not protect Canada. Britain would not fight the United States in order to protect Canada, nor did he blame her. The Monroe Doctrine was Canada's defence against external enemies. In time of war Canadian trade, contraband excepted, could be carried in neutral ships.

The imperialists, Mr. Bourassa continued, were accustomed to say that if nothing was done, the Empire would fall to pieces. It was possible; yet if Canada and the rest of the Empire were left free to develop in their own national and ethnic traditions, the separation would be a long way off, and harmonious. The consequence of the imperialist policy would be an early rupture in conflict and hatred:

Je dis aux impérialistes sincères: Revenez sur la terre, voyez les hommes comme ils sont: Vous ne pouvez pas du Canadien faire un Anglais, vous ne pouvez pas de l'Australien faire un Néo-Zélandais.

These arguments, he said, applied equally to all Canadians. "Il n'y a pas ici de querelle de races." Mr. Bourassa concluded by saying that no one there had loved Laurier more than he had; but that his country came first. He offered a resolution that Parliament had no right to commit the Dominion to an entirely new naval policy without the previous consent of the people, and ought not to enact the bill until after a plebiscite should have been held.¹⁶

When the House of Commons divided, Monk's amendment to the amendment was defeated, 175 to 18; and Borden's amendment by 129 to 74. W. B. Northrup (East Hastings) then moved that the second reading of the bill should be postponed for six months; but this amendment was defeated by 119

¹⁶ Henri Bourassa, *Le Projet de Loi Navale*, Pub. Arch. Pamph. Cat., II, No. 3706.

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to 78. On its third reading the Naval Service Bill was passed by 111 to 70, with eighteen Members pairing.

This important debate had contrasted markedly with the one of the previous year, in that before it began definite Party lines had been drawn concerning the question at issue. Both Parties were seriously divided, and each of the principal policies was a compromise. The unity of the Conservatives, however, was much the more seriously affected; and it should be noted that Borden at this time lacked his rival's tremendous prestige, and that his control over his Party was much weaker than that which Laurier exercised over his own followers. The naval policy of a Dominion involved the whole question of imperial relations: it is not surprising, therefore, that debate ranged much more widely than the title of the bill would imply. Quotations from eminent statesmen or seamen had been carefully collected, like pearls of great price, by many Members on both sides. The results of these researches were usually to the effect that there was, or was not, an emergency; or that contributions by the Dominions were, or were not, the best solution. From time to time throughout the debate, salvoes of these excerpts were fired off in the House. The Monroe Doctrine was seldom mentioned, and then usually in order to minimize its importance or relevance; the reason being, no doubt, that it seemed in those days to weigh against the need for any naval commitment. The annexation argument also appeared but seldom, and was used to support both the bill and the emergency contribution.

The division in public opinion on the naval question at this time was illustrated by certain events which took place in the city of Ottawa. When the debate which has just been described began on the summit of Parliament Hill, another verbal conflict was raging in the city below; and the issue in both cases was the same. The intensity of the municipal contest was at least equal to that displayed at the top of the hill, and the casualties suffered in it were much heavier. It was due to the Prime Minister, in the first instance, that these minor hostilities occurred. Laurier had been representing both Quebec East and an Ottawa constituency: on December 17, 1909, he resigned his seat in Ottawa, and a by-election to fill the vacancy was called for January. A former Mayor of Ottawa, a Conservative in politics, immediately came forward as an independent candidate. He was opposed to the creation of a Canadian navy, feeling strongly that a Dreadnought should be contribu-

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ted without delay; accordingly he wished to bring the government's naval policy to a test. The Ottawa *Citizen* supported his candidacy, while the *Journal* and *Free Press* opposed him. Of the two Ottawa constituencies it was customary for one to be represented by a French-speaking Member, and the uncontested seat already had an English-speaking occupant. The local Liberals therefore put up a French-speaking candidate for the vacant constituency, and the Conservatives followed suit. The Liberal candidate, however, was repudiated by the leaders and press of his Party. For a while it was a three-cornered contest, as the former Mayor refused to withdraw. Nevertheless the *Citizen* ceased to support him, and he gave up the fight soon afterwards. Meanwhile the irregular Liberal candidate had also withdrawn, and had been replaced by another contender who enjoyed the support of the government and of the Liberal press. This curiously confused by-election was fought almost exclusively on the naval issue, and as on the hilltop so in the plain below the government won a victory. On January 29, 1910, the Liberal candidate obtained 5,779 votes to 5,121 for his opponent.¹⁷

¹⁷ On this by-election see the following Ottawa newspapers: *Citizen*, *Evening Journal*, *Free Press*, and *Le Temps*, for the period Dec. 17, 1909 to Jan. 31, 1910 inclusive.

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THE Naval Service Act¹ created a Department of the Naval Service under the Minister of Marine and Fisheries who would also be the Minister of the Naval Service, and authorized the appointment of a Deputy Minister. The Command in Chief of the naval forces was declared "to continue and be vested in the King." A Director of the Naval Service was provided for, to be the professional head of the Service, preferably with a rank not lower than that of Rear Admiral. The Governor in Council was authorized to organize and maintain a permanent naval force, to appoint a Naval Board to advise the Minister, and from time to time to authorize complements of officers and men. Conditions of service were also briefly laid down. Section 23 of the Act read:

In case of an emergency the Governor in Council may place at the disposal of His Majesty, for general service in the Royal Navy, the Naval Service or any part thereof, any ships or vessels of the Naval Service, and the officers and seamen serving in such ships or vessels, or any officers or seamen belonging to the Naval Service.

A Naval Reserve Force and a Naval Volunteer Force were authorized, and both forces were to be liable for active service in an emergency. A naval college was provided for in order to train prospective officers in all branches of naval science, tactics, and strategy. The Naval Discipline Act of 1866, and the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, where applicable and except to the extent that they might be inconsistent with the Naval Service Act or with regulations made under it, were to apply to the Service. The Governor in Council was authorized to make regulations for carrying out the Act, and for the organization, training, and discipline of the Naval Service.

The Naval Service Act was assented to on May 4, 1910: it remained to carry out its provisions by establishing a naval Service. The latter was placed, as laid down in the Act, with

¹ 9-10 *Edw. VII*, c. 43. For the text of this Act, as originally passed, see App. v.

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the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The Hon. Louis Philippe Brodeur, who had headed that Department since 1906, became also Minister of the Naval Service. Unlike the First Lord of the Admiralty, who shares his responsibility to some extent with the Sea Lords, the Canadian Minister was vested with complete authority and responsibility, his professional colleagues being advisers only.² George J. Desbarats, who had been Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries since 1907 became the first Deputy Minister of the Naval Service, and Rear Admiral Kingsmill its first Director, an appointment which he was to hold until 1921. Seven other officers of the Royal Navy who were already on loan to the Canadian Government were also transferred to the new Department.

This Department was divided into five branches: Naval, Fishery Protection, Tidal and Current Survey, Hydrographic Survey, and Wireless Telegraph. All except the first of these had been detached from the Department of Marine and Fisheries, and transferred in accord with Section 2 of the Act. The Wireless Telegraph Service at that time comprised 21 government-owned stations. Of these, 13 were on the east coast, most of them situated on the St. Lawrence River or the Gulf; 2 were in Newfoundland; and 6 were in British Columbia. Regulations for the entry of officers and men into the Naval Service, and rates of pay and allowances, were authorized. The old cruisers *Niobe* and *Rainbow* were bought from the Admiralty and brought to Canada to be used as training ships, and a naval college was established in Halifax.

The smaller of the two cruisers, the *Rainbow*, was intended for the west coast; the other, H.M.S. *Niobe*, was to be based on Halifax, and for her the Admiralty received £215,000.³ The *Niobe* was a protected cruiser of the Diadem class,⁴ launched in 1899 at a cost of £600,000. Contrary to a general impression, she was a very big cruiser. Her displacement was more than three-fifths that of the famous *Dreadnought*, which at her launch, seven years after than of *Niobe*, was a battle-

² Naval Service Act, Secs. 7-10 inclusive.

³ P.C. 118, Jan. 24, 1910.

⁴ A "protected" cruiser had no side or deck armour, but over her vital installations amidships lay a shield of armour, convex on top and lying below the upper deck. *Niobe* was one of the last protected cruisers to be built for the Royal Navy.

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ship of the largest size. The *Niobe* also mounted a tremendous armament.⁵

In July 1910 the Director of the Naval Service went to England to attend the trials of the two cruisers and to take them over from the Admiralty. Before they were transferred a number of alterations were carried out, to make them more suitable as training ships.⁶ The *Niobe* was commissioned in the Canadian Service at Devonport on September 6, 1910, with Cdr. W. B. Macdonald, R.N., a native of British Columbia, as her captain, and on this occasion a silk ensign was presented to the ship on behalf of the Queen. On a full-power trial two days later the *Niobe* made seventeen knots. On September 27 some Canadian journalists visited the ship, and on October 10 she left Devonport bound for Halifax.⁷ On her way over she received the following signal from N.S.H.Q., via Cape Race: "Keep look out for Wellman's airship America . . . sailed from Atlantic City . . . for England, last heard of 12.45 p.m. Sunday abreast of Nantucket, report if seen."⁸ *Niobe*, however, saw nothing of Walter Wellman's dirigible, which had lost buoyancy and landed in the sea far to the southward of the cruiser's course, the crew being rescued by a passing steamer.

The *Niobe* reached Halifax on October 21, 1910—the hundred-and-fifth anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar. At the harbour entrance she was met by the fishery protection cruiser *Canada*. After sending a message of welcome the *Canada* turned and steamed up the harbour, followed by the *Niobe* which came to anchor at 12.45 p.m. off the dockyard.⁹ The Royal Canadian Navy was a fact. Perhaps because the years between have been so replete with tumults and the upsetting of once certain things, that day seems long ago. Whether Home Rule could be given to Ireland despite the House of Lords was then an urgent question. South Africa was a Union at last, but its first Parliament had yet to meet. King Manoel of Portugal had been driven from his throne, and the dancer Gaby Deslys was offering to help him back on to it again, though how this was to be done she did not

⁵ Statistics of *Niobe*: displacement, 11,000 tons; length, 435'; beam, 69'; draught, 26'; shaft h.p., 16,500; designed speed, 20.5 k.; bunker capacity, 1,000 tons; armament, 16 6", 12 12-pdr., 5 3-pdr. guns; 2 18" torpedo tubes; complement, about 700.

⁶ *Annual Report*, 1911, p. 16.

⁷ *Niobe's Log*.

⁸ Naval to *Niobe*, Oct. 18, 1910, N.S. 18-1-1.

⁹ *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 22, 1910.

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say, nor why. Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen was being tried for his life in London.

After *Niobe* had fired a salute of twenty-one guns and dressed ship, she was visited by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, and other notables. The Minister, Hon. Louis Philippe Brodeur, welcomed the ship and her complement on behalf of the government. In the course of his speech he said that:

This event tells the story of a dawning epoch of self-reliance. It proclaims to the whole British Empire that Canada is willing and proud to provide as rapidly as circumstances will permit for her local naval defence and to safeguard her share in the commerce and trade of the Empire . . . in whose world-girding belt Canada is the bright and precious buckle.

As did many speakers and editors at this time, he emphasized the idea that an enlargement of self-government involves increased responsibilities.¹⁰

A country is unfortunate when the basic principles of its defence policy are included in the field of party strife. From this misfortune Canada had suffered in respect to her naval policy, and when the *Niobe* arrived the Naval Service Act was still highly controversial. On the very evening before she reached Halifax, Mr. Henri Bourassa had presided at a huge Nationalist meeting in Montreal at which he, Monk, and Armand Lavergne, had ridden full tilt against Laurier's whole naval policy. Nor could the Conservative newspapers entirely and at once forget that *Niobe* was part of Laurier's policy made flesh. The welcome which the press accorded to the cruiser, consequently, though widespread was not unanimous, and comment ranged all the way down the scale from enthusiasm to hostility and mockery. According to *La Patrie*:

L'arrivée du 'Niobé' à Halifax, hier, marque en quelque sorte la naissance de la marine canadienne. C'est le premier navire de guerre canadien, et chacun sait qu'on en veut faire un navire-école. Le ministre de la marine a souhaité la bienvenue aux marins du 'Niobé', et il a eu des mots bien trouvés pour souligner l'importance historique de cette arrivée du croiseur dans les eaux canadiennes.¹¹

"This splendid ship", stated the Charlottetown *Patriot*, another Liberal newspaper, "is the first real warship of the Canadian Navy and is but the beginning of that naval defence

¹⁰ Halifax *Herald*, Oct. 22, 1910.

¹¹ *La Patrie*, Montreal, Oct. 22, 1910.

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which ranks Canada in the sisterhood of nations.”¹² The *Halifax Chronicle* held nothing in reserve: “Here where we have been bred to the ocean, and have for a century and more been associated with the fleet which keeps and guards the sea, we welcome the *Niobe* in no perfunctory way.”¹³

The *Halifax Herald*, to whom Laurier and all his works were anathema, had this to say:

H.M.C.S. *Niobe* is in port, and once more Halifax becomes a naval headquarters. The four letters look strange, but we may get accustomed to the change from the old fashioned ‘H.M.S.’, which Halifax once knew. The newcomer among the initials stands for ‘Canadian’, so that now it all means ‘His Majesty’s Canadian Ship *Niobe*’.¹⁴

Some other Conservative organs were moderately friendly, among them being the *Montreal Gazette*:

The *Niobe*, the first ship of the new Canadian navy to reach Halifax, has been welcomed with addresses and gifts and loyal acclaim. This is good and wholesome. Perhaps it indicates that in a little while there will be found a complement of Canadians, enlisted men, qualified to work the ship. So long as volunteers from England are needed to keep the crews of Canadian war craft up to the standard, the new organization may be a drain on rather than a help to the British fighting fleet.¹⁵

Le Canada, in the same city, rebutted a charge frequently made by the Nationalists that the *Niobe* would soon be too old for fighting, stating that she was only intended for training, and that the Admiralty had given Canada a very good bargain.¹⁶

The *Toronto Mail and Empire* was openly scornful:

The coming of the *Niobe* means that we now have our first warship. The *Niobe* is a cruiser which the Royal Navy has discarded. She was on her way to the scrap heap when the Ottawa Government determined that we should have a navy of our own. That decision necessitated the buying of ships, and the *Niobe* is our first purchase. Her cost is \$1,075,000, and she is to be employed in protecting the Atlantic coast from the enemy. The first defence work assigned to the *Niobe* will partake of the nature of a holiday trip to the West Indies, with the Governor-General on board. After that she will be at the disposal of the Ministers for other defence work of a similar character.¹⁷

While the Conservative press had been opposing a separate Canadian navy, the Nationalists in Quebec could not abide

¹² *The Daily Patriot*, Charlottetown, Oct. 24, 1910.

¹³ *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 21, 1910.

¹⁴ *Halifax Herald*, Oct. 22, 1910.

¹⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, Oct. 24, 1910.

¹⁶ *Le Canada*, Montreal, Oct. 22, 1910.

¹⁷ *Toronto Mail and Empire*, Oct. 22, 1910.

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the idea of a Canadian naval policy of any sort. Expressing their point of view, Mr. Bourassa's newspaper *Le Devoir*, perhaps the wittiest periodical in the country, announced the *Niobe's* arrival in this way, in a news column: "Le croiseur 'Niobé', le noyau de la flotte canadienne (canadienne en temps de paix, impériale en temps de guerre), est arrivé hier à Halifax."¹⁸

The *Niobe* had been manned in England by a skeleton crew consisting of officers and active and reserve ratings of the Royal Navy, and after her arrival in Canada recruits were obtained from shore to be trained on board. Since Halifax had then neither naval college nor barracks, the *Niobe's* great size had recommended her strongly at the time when she was chosen. The plan was to use her for training until the projected warships should have been completed, and after that she was to be employed both for training and as a depot ship for destroyers. During the first winter no cruising was done, since the complement had not been filled by recruits and also because *Niobe's* officers were needed to help in organizing the Halifax dockyard.

In the summer of 1911 the *Niobe* was nearly lost by misadventure. While on her way from Yarmouth to Shelburne, shortly after midnight of July 30-31, in thick weather and with a strong tide running, the cruiser struck a rock on the Southwest Ledge off Cape Sable. She pounded heavily as the crew went to their stations, and the boats were swung out and provisioned, wireless calls were sent out, and other necessary measures taken. About two hours after striking the ship floated clear. An anchor was promptly lowered, but it dragged, while with the starboard engine-room flooded and the rudder and port propeller damaged the *Niobe* was in danger of going aground again. Soon after dawn some fishermen and pilots arrived who were able to tell the captain where he was. In the course of the next few hours tugs and a large number of fishing boats arrived on the scene. By that time the cruiser was settling by the stern, and accordingly all of the crew who could be spared were transferred to fishing boats. The carpenters worked at shoring up bulkheads and water-tight doors until water swept them off their feet. As steering proved difficult a tug took the ship in tow, and she arrived safely at Clark's Harbour, where she remained until on August 5

¹⁸ *Le Devoir*, Montreal, Oct. 22, 1910.

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H.M.S. *Cornwall* came to her assistance. In a dense fog, however, the *Cornwall* damaged herself on an uncharted rock while feeling her way in towards *Niobe*: nevertheless she was able to tow the latter to Halifax where both ships were repaired. *Niobe's* navigating officer was severely reprimanded and dismissed his ship by a Court Martial, and the officer of the watch was reprimanded.¹⁹

The repair work on *Niobe* was not completed until December 1912. Meanwhile the personnel from the Royal Navy who formed the framework of her crew had been returned to England and not replaced. The Naval Service at this time, indeed, was like a clock that is being allowed to run down. No new ships were being built, the Service had only the most meagre prospects to offer to either officers or ratings, and desertions were frequent. Until the First World War *Niobe* stayed in port, training the remaining men in an atmosphere of discouragement and futility.

The *Rainbow* was a light cruiser of the Apollo class, and the Canadian Government paid £50,000 for her and assigned her to the west coast. A ship of the Royal Navy often has many predecessors of the same name, and on the *Rainbow's* hand steering-wheels were inscribed the names and dates of actions in which earlier Rainbows had taken part: "Spanish Armada 1588—Cadiz 1596—Brest 1599—Lowestoft 1665—North Foreland 1666—Lagos Bay 1759—Frigate Hancock 1777—Frigate Hebe 1777."²⁰

The *Rainbow* was commissioned as an H.M.C. ship at Portsmouth on August 4, 1910, and was manned by a nucleus crew supplied by the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Reserve. The personnel were entered on loan for a period of two years, while the fleet reservists were enrolled in the Royal Canadian Navy under special service engagements of from two to five years. On August 8 the *Rainbow*, commanded by Cdr. J. D. D. Stewart, received her sailing orders, the first instructions ever given to a warship by the Canadian naval authorities.²¹ She left Portsmouth on August 20 for Esquimalt, sailing around South America by way of the Strait of

¹⁹ *Annual Report*, 1912, pp. 18-19; Fleet Paymaster J. S. Annesley (paymaster on board *Niobe*) to Capt. W. G. Annesley, n.d. (Letter kindly lent by Mrs. J. S. Annesley).

²⁰ See F. V. Longstaff, "The Eight 'Rainbows'", *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, VIII, No. 2.

²¹ N.S. 2-5-2. The account of *Rainbow's* cruise to Esquimalt is based, except where otherwise indicated, on material contained in this folder and in the cruiser's log.

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Magellan, a distance of about 15,000 nautical miles. At the equator "Father Neptune" came aboard wearing a crown of gilded papier-mâché, attended by his courtiers and his bears, and performed his judicial duties in the time-honoured way.

Near Callao the German cruiser *Bremen* was seen carrying out heavy-gun firing practice at a moored target, and at the end of the cruise Cdr. Stewart reported on what had been observed of this practice firing. The Admiralty knew very little at this time about the German Navy's gunnery.²² Naval Headquarters in Ottawa immediately asked Cdr. Stewart for further particulars; but these he was unable to supply. On the morning of November 7, 1910, the *Rainbow* arrived at Esquimalt which was to be her home thenceforth. Among the ships in port when she arrived were two, H.M.S. *Shearwater* and the Grand Trunk Pacific steamer *Prince George*, with whom she was to be closely associated four years later. Having saluted the country with twenty-one guns the *Rainbow* dressed ship and prepared to receive distinguished visitors.²³

The following day the *Victoria Colonist* announced that:

History was made at Esquimalt yesterday. H.M.C.S. *Rainbow* came; and a new navy was born. Canada's blue ensign flies for the first time on the Dominion's own fighting ship in the Pacific—the ocean of the future where some of the world's greatest problems will have to be worked out. Esquimalt began its recrudescence, the revival of its former glories.²⁴

The *Victoria Times* reported that "nothing but the most favorable comment was heard on the trim little cruiser." The same newspaper stated in an editorial that:

We are pleased to welcome His Majesty's Canadian ship *Rainbow* to our port to-day. We are told in ancient literature that the first rainbow was set in the sky as a promise of things to come. So may it be with His Majesty's ship. She is a training craft only, but she is the first fruits on this coast of the Canadian naval policy, the necessary forerunner of the larger vessels which will add dignity to our name and prestige to our actions.²⁵

According to the *Colonist*:

The event was one calculated to awaken thought in the minds of all who endeavored to grasp its true significance. The *Rainbow* is not a fighting ship, but she is manned by fighting men, and her mission is to train

²² See confidential report by the British naval attaché in Berlin, Gooch and Temperley. *British Documents*, vi, pp. 506-10.

²³ *Daily Times*, Victoria, B.C., Nov. 7, 1910.

²⁴ *Daily Colonist*, Victoria, B.C., Nov. 8, 1910.

²⁵ *Times*, Victoria, Nov. 7, 1910.

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men so as to make them fit to defend our country from invasion, protect our commerce on the seas and maintain the dignity of the Empire everywhere. Her coming is a proof that Canada has accepted a new responsibility in the discharge of which new burdens will have to be assumed. On this Western Frontier of Empire it is all important that there shall be a naval establishment that will count for something in an hour of stress.²⁶

Early in the following month the *Rainbow* visited Vancouver, where the mayor and citizens extended a warm welcome. Soon after her arrival on the coast the cruiser was placed on training duty and recruits were sought and obtained, twenty-three joining up during the ship's first visit to Vancouver.²⁷ On March 13, 1911, the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier of British Columbia presented the ship with a set of plate, the gift of the Province. During the next year-and-a-half *Rainbow* made cruises up the coast, calling at various ports where she was in great request for ceremonies of all sorts. On some of these cruises training was combined with fishery patrol work, which chiefly consisted in seeing that American fishermen did not fish inside the three-mile limit.

Meanwhile the policy of developing a Canadian navy had been allowed to lapse. Accordingly, during the two years immediately preceding the First World War, the *Rainbow* lay at Esquimalt with a shrunken complement, engaged in harbour training, except when an occasional short cruise was undertaken for the sake of her engines.

British warships had long been helping to enforce certain sealing agreements covering the North Pacific, and for several years prior to the First World War this work had been done by the sloops *Algerine* and *Shearwater*. During the summer of 1914 these vessels were performing duties on the Mexican coast: the Canadian Government had therefore decided to send the *Rainbow* on sealing patrol, and on July 9 she was ordered to prepare for a three-months' cruise. Her extremely slender crew was strengthened by a detachment from England, another from the *Niobe*, and by volunteers from Vancouver and Victoria. She was dry-docked for cleaning and replenished with stores and fuel.

In May 1914, the steamer *Komagata Maru* had reached Canada, carrying nearly 400 passengers, natives of India who were would-be immigrants. When they found their entry barred by certain Dominion regulations the Indians refused

²⁶ *Colonist*, Victoria, Nov. 8, 1910.

²⁷ Report of Proceedings, Dec. 2, 1910, N.S. 2-5-1.

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to leave Vancouver harbour, staying on and on, though their food supplies ran low. On July 18, 175 local police and other officials tried to board the *Komagata Maru*, so as to take the Indians off by force and put them aboard the *Empress of India* for passage to Hong Kong. A storm of missiles which included lumps of coal greeted the police, who thereupon steamed away without having used their firearms.²⁸

By this time the *Rainbow* was in a condition to intervene. The Naval Service Act contained no provision for naval aid to the civil power; nevertheless, on July 19 the *Rainbow's* commander was instructed to ask the authorities in Vancouver whether or not they wanted his assistance, and the next day he reported that: "*Rainbow* can be ready to leave for Vancouver ten o'clock tonight . . . immigration agent Vancouver and crown law officers very anxious for *Rainbow* . . ." ²⁹ The cruiser was ordered to proceed to Vancouver and to render all possible assistance, while the militia authorities were instructed to co-operate with her in every way. She left Esquimalt that night taking a detachment of artillery with her, and reached Vancouver next morning.

As H.M.C.S. RAINBOW steamed in through the Narrows on the bright summer's morning and the Harbour and City opened up it was a wonderful sight. Every street end, every window, every possible vantage ground was thronged with expectant crowds, the waters of the harbour were like a regatta day, and all deadly still.

As RAINBOW steamed round the 'Komagata Maru', the latter's decks crowded with the recalcitrant Indians, one grizzled veteran, late of the Indian Army, put the relieving touch of humour on the otherwise serious outlook by standing on the upper bridge of the 'Komagata' and semaphoring to the RAINBOW—'Our only ammunition is coal'.³⁰

The Indians had laid hands on the Japanese captain of the *Komagata Maru* in an attempt to seize his vessel. The warship's presence had the desired effect, however, without the use of violence; the Indians agreed to leave, and were given a large consignment of food, a pilot was supplied from the *Rainbow*, and on July 23 the *Komagata Maru* sailed for Hong Kong. The cruiser saw her safely off the premises, accompanying her out through the Strait of Juan de Fuca as far as the open sea, and then returned to Esquimalt.

²⁸ For a full account see Robie L. Reid, "The Inside Story of the *Komagata Maru*," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, v (1941), pp. 1-23.

²⁹ Hose to N.S.H.Q., July 20, 1914, N.S. 1048-3-9 (2).

³⁰ Account by Capt. Walter Hose enclosed in *idem* to S. Brent, Esq., Feb. 19, 1919, N.S. 1000-5-5 (1).



Admiral Sir Charles Kingsmill

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The personnel for the newly-created Service were obtained partly in Canada and partly by borrowing from the Admiralty. The first Director of the Naval Service was Rear Admiral Charles Edmund Kingsmill, who was born in 1855 at Guelph, Ontario, and in 1870 became a midshipman in the Royal Navy. He was promoted sub-lieutenant in 1875, lieutenant in 1877, commander in 1891, and captain in 1898. In 1908 he retired with the rank of Rear Admiral, and came to Canada to command the Marine Service of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Kingsmill had served on stations all over the world, and had commanded the *Goldfinch*, *Blenheim*, *Archer*, *Gibraltar*, *Mildura*, *Resolution*, *Majestic*, and *Dominion*. He had seen service in Somaliland in 1884 and received the bronze medal and Khedive's Star for service in Egypt in 1892, and was to be knighted in 1918. On April 19, 1909, three weeks after the Foster resolution had been moved in the House of Commons, Kingsmill addressed to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries a memorandum, with enclosures, containing his professional advice as to setting up a Canadian naval organization.³¹ The memorandum recommended that Halifax and Esquimalt should have their defences and equipment put into good order and modernized. The suggested building programme was as follows:

We should at once commence building destroyers and cruisers. What we should build, that is lay down, now as soon as possible, would be: Two ocean going destroyers, vessels of 700 to 900 tons displacement, for the Atlantic; two coastal destroyers, vessels of 270 tons displacement, for the Pacific coast; four torpedo boats; the torpedo boats could be built, after a model has been obtained, in Canada, to save sending them round Cape Horn to British Columbia.

The greater part of this memorandum was devoted to the salient and difficult question of training officers and ratings for a naval organization which would have to start from scratch.

Several other active or retired naval officers were also employed by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, and three of them who were on loan from the Royal Navy were transferred to the Naval Service at its inception, along with Kingsmill. Of these, Cdr. J. D. D. Stewart was assigned to command H.M.C.S. *Rainbow*, Lieut. R. M. Stephens was appointed Director of Gunnery, and Fleet Paymaster P. J. Ling became Secretary to the Naval Staff. Shortly afterwards

³¹ *Report on Naval Defence* (Government Printing Bureau, Ottawa 1909). Original drafts in N.S. 1017-1-1 (1).

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the Admiralty lent Cdr. W. B. Macdonald to command the *Niobe*, and Cdr. C. D. Roper who became Chief of Staff. The following civilian directors were also transferred at this time from Marine and Fisheries to the Naval Service: Messrs. L. J. Beausoleil, Chief Accountant; J. A. Wilson, Director of Stores; C. P. Edwards, Director of the Radiotelegraph Branch; W. J. Stewart, Chief Hydrographer; and Dr. W. B. Dawson, Director of the Tidal and Current Survey. These officers and civilians were the first stones in the foundation of the new organization. In November, 1911, a civilian complement of 66 was authorized for the Naval Service, consisting of a Deputy Minister, 61 clerks of various grades, and 4 messengers.²²

The first Deputy Minister was George J. Desbarats. Born in Quebec, P.Q., in 1861, he became a civil engineer, obtained a wide experience in engineering work connected with canals and railways, and was later responsible for a hydrographic survey of the St. Lawrence River. In 1901 Desbarats became director of the government shipyard at Sorel, and in 1908 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries. He was Deputy Minister and Comptroller of the Naval Service from May 5, 1910, until the consolidation of 1922, and in 1924 he became Deputy Minister of National Defence. He retired in 1932 and died in 1944. Throughout the first twelve years of his long tenure of office, the Naval Service having no Minister whose main concern it was, Desbarats' authority and influence considerably exceeded those of most Deputy Ministers; and during the first two decades of its existence he probably had more to do with moulding the Service than any other man.

In the spring of 1909 Cdr. Walter Hose, R.N., executive officer of the armoured cruiser H.M.S. *Cochrane*, was corresponding with Admiral Kingsmill concerning employment as a naval officer in Canada. Born at sea in 1875, he had entered the Royal Navy in 1890. He served in many parts of the world, including Newfoundland waters, and his wife whom he married in 1905 was a native of St. John's. He took the War Staff course at Greenwich, and a course in amphibious Operations at the Military Staff College, Camberley. Promoted to commander in 1908, his commands in the Royal Navy were H.M. ships *Tweed*, *Ringdove*, *Kale*, *Redbreast*, and *Jason*. In 1911 the Admiralty lent Cdr. Hose to the Naval Service,

²² P.C. 45/2613, Nov. 18, 1911.

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and in June of that year he was appointed to succeed Cdr. Stewart in command of the *Rainbow*. The following year he voluntarily retired from the Royal Navy to throw in his lot permanently with the Naval Service. He was in command of the *Rainbow* until early in 1917, when he was transferred to Ottawa to organize the east coast patrols, and in the summer of that year was appointed Captain of Patrols, a post which he held for the remainder of the war. After a year as Senior Naval Officer at Halifax, he was appointed to duty at N.S.H.Q. in December, 1918; in 1920 he became Assistant Director of the Naval Service; and in January, 1921, he succeeded Kingsmill as Director.

It was intended from the beginning to man the Service with Canadian officers and ratings, but at the start and for many years afterwards there were practically none with the necessary training. The newly-founded naval college was expected as time went on to provide enough officers; but at first the Admiralty had to be relied upon to supply all those required, and for many years the senior officers continued to be lent by the Royal Navy. In order not to block the promotion of young Canadian officers who were advancing in seniority, officers of the Royal Navy on loan to the Naval Service were almost always given temporary appointments, usually for four years. They were paid by the Dominion Government at Canadian rates, and while the Admiralty gave them no pay while employed by the Canadian Government, the time so spent counted as service in the Royal Navy. During the early years, also, the Royal Navy supplied a considerable proportion of the ratings required by the Naval Service. Assistance of this sort was an old story to the Admiralty, which was helping the young Australian Service in a similar way and had in the past acted as mentor and exemplar to half the navies in the world.

For several months after the arrival in Canada of the *Niobe* and *Rainbow*, such recruits as offered themselves on board either of the cruisers were accepted if they met the physical and educational requirements. In February 1911, posters calling for recruits for the Naval Service were exhibited in all the principal cities and towns of the Dominion, a recruiting pamphlet was widely distributed, and local postmasters were authorized to act as recruiting agents. Local doctors examined the prospective recruits, subject to final acceptance by a naval medical officer. Seamen were entered

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between the ages of 15 and 23, stokers from 18 to 23, and boys from 14 to 16 years. All had to engage to serve for 7 years from the age of 18, with the option of re-engaging, if recommended, for one or two further periods of 7 years each.³³ The number of recruits obtained in Canada during the first two years, and the Provinces from which they came, were:³⁴

	1911			1912			1911-1912 Grand Total
	<i>Niobe</i>	<i>Rainbow</i>	Total	<i>Niobe</i>	<i>Rainbow</i>	Total	
Nova Scotia...	97	..	97	37	..	37	134
New Brunswick	3	..	3	2	1	3	6
Prince Edw. I..	11	..	11	8	..	8	19
Quebec.....	28	..	28	11	..	11	39
Ontario.....	45	2	47	52	..	52	99
Manitoba.....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
Saskatchewan..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1
Alberta.....	..	1	1	..	3	3	4
British Columbia....	1	35	36	..	11	11	47
Totals.....	185	38	223	111	16	127	350

Pensioners and Fleet Reserve men of the Royal Navy were allowed by the Admiralty to enlist in the Canadian Service; and many did so, being entered for a period of five years under special service engagements which carried gratuities not payable to general service personnel.

Conditions in the Royal Canadian Navy required to be unusually good if enough recruits were to be obtained. It was not customary for young Canadians to take up a naval career; the wages and standard of living in Canada were high; and most of the recruits would come from that half of the population which was of British origin. To conform to these special circumstances the rates of pay, especially for ratings, were set at a much higher level than those which prevailed in the Royal Navy, and most of the ships which the Royal Canadian Navy acquired from time to time were made more comfortable by the addition of fittings not usually provided in warships. Another problem, which resulted from the immense size of the country and the distribution of its inhabitants, was that of affording adequate home leave to men from far inland. On

³³ *Annual Report*, 1911, p. 18.

³⁴ *Annual Reports*, 1911, 1912.

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the other hand, there was reason to think that the men of the hinterlands, if they joined the navy at all, would develop into sailors as good as any others. The German Navy was finding this to be true, and Admiral Tirpitz has stated that when the supply of recruits from the coast regions proved insufficient:

... we went inland for recruits; service in modern ships did not make the same demands on seamanship as in the old days of sailing vessels. The South Germans, and among them the Alsatians, distinguished themselves in the navy.³⁵

In the event, the German experience was duplicated in Canada.

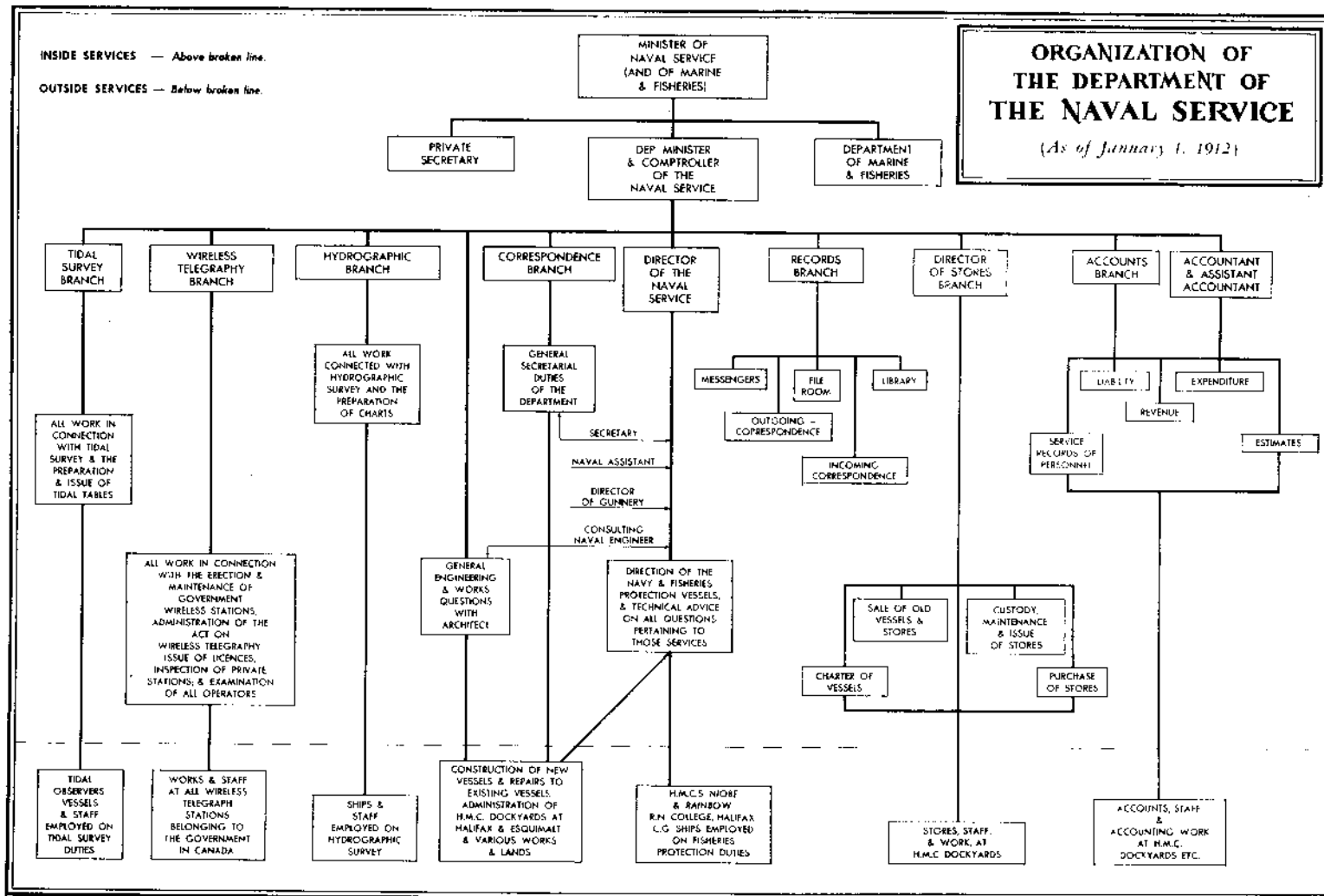
The Royal Canadian Navy was patterned on the Royal Navy and remained so throughout the period. Only when Canadian conditions dictated it, notably in the case of pay and allowances, were innovations made. Titles of ranks were the same, and of ratings almost the same, as in the Royal Navy. The regulations governing examinations, advancement and promotions, and the uniforms of all ranks and ratings, were identical in the two Services. Almost all of the Naval Discipline Act and of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions applied to the Canadian Service.³⁶ The professional idiom and to a less extent the colloquialisms were the same, while the customs and etiquette of the Royal Navy as well as its incomparably rich traditions, were accepted by the younger Service. Although living as it were under the shadow of the larger organization may have tended to discourage originality and initiative, it can scarcely be doubted that the Canadian navy profited immensely from its close and continuous association with the greatest Service that the seas have known. Moreover a close conformity between the two navies offered a further advantage; for they were likely to act closely together in war, and such co-operation is much easier when the partners are almost identical in organization, training, and doctrine.

In June 1911 a party consisting of a lieutenant, 2 midshipmen, and 35 ratings, represented the Royal Canadian Navy at the coronation of King George V. The midshipmen were Percy W. Nelles, a future Chief of the Naval Staff, and Victor Brodeur, who later became a Rear Admiral, while one of the ratings is now Rear Admiral (S) J. O. Cossette, R.C.N.

³⁵ Tirpitz, *Memoirs*, I, p. 148.

³⁶ *Naval Service Act*, 1910, sec. 45.

PLATE III



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(Ret'd). By the end of that year the fact that no contract for new ships had been awarded, together with the several-times expressed intention of the Borden government to ask for the repeal of the Naval Service Act, made it impossible for the Service to offer much inducement for young men to seek a career in it. In his annual report for the year ending March 31, 1912, the Deputy Minister stated that no special efforts had been made to obtain recruits. During that year 126 recruits had been entered and there had been 149 desertions. In February 1913, the Deputy Minister reported that the training cruisers had only about half their full complements on board and were confined to harbour and almost reduced to the condition of hulks, and he added that the Department did not know what to do. In the year preceding March 31, 1914, no recruiting was done, and most of the ranks and ratings on loan from the Admiralty, having completed their service, were returned to Great Britain without being replaced.

Equally acute was the problem of the young officers and cadets. In the fall of 1913 five officers, Sub-Lieuts. German, Nelles, Beard, Bate, and Brodeur, who had started their careers before the Naval Service Act was passed and begun their training in C.G.S. *Canada*, were finishing their preparation for the rank of lieutenant. Nineteen cadets were completing their training in H.M.S. *Berwick*, and by the end of the year would need to begin two years' training in a sea-going cruiser. It was necessary either to train them for the Canadian Service if this was to be continued, or for them to be absorbed by the Royal Navy.³⁷ A year later, however, the coming of the First World War solved these particular personnel problems for the time being.

The Naval Service Act provided for the creation of a naval college³⁸ "for the purpose of imparting a complete education in all branches of naval science, tactics and strategy." Even before the Act had been passed steps were taken to implement this provision. Halifax was selected as the best site for the college, and the old naval hospital in the dock-yard was set aside for that purpose. The college, which was opened on January 11, 1910, had accommodation for forty-five cadets. The cadets lived and studied in the college proper, while separate buildings which formed part of the establishment included a small electrical laboratory, engineering work-

³⁷ Memos. in Borden Papers, O'C. No. 659.

³⁸ Secs. 32-36.

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shops and drawing office, a gymnasium, sick quarters, and a boathouse. A playing field was provided in the Admiralty House grounds. The original constitution of the college provided that candidates for entry should be British subjects between 14 and 16 years of age, and that entry should be by a competitive examination set and graded by the Civil Service Commission. In November 1910, the Commission held an examination for entry: there were 30 vacancies, and 34 boys took the examination, of whom 21 passed. During the early years Cdr. A. E. Nixon, R.N., commanded the college, and was assisted by a Director of Studies. The naval instructional staff was lent by the Admiralty; and three civilian schoolmasters, who had been appointed on the recommendation of the Civil Service Commission, taught mathematics, science, and languages.³⁹ A two-year course was provided, and within the limits set by mediocre facilities and a much shorter course, the curriculum was approximated to that of the naval colleges in Britain. The cadet's two years at the college were to be followed by a year's training in one of H.M. cruisers. In October 1910 the King's permission was obtained to add the prefix "Royal" to the title of the college,⁴⁰ a privilege which the Royal Naval College of Canada received before the Royal Canadian Navy itself did.⁴¹

The change in naval policy announced by the Borden government seemed to have expunged the original purpose of the college to train officers for the R.C.N.; but the government did not wish to close the institution. The curriculum was therefore broadened so as to include preparation for other careers, while the course was lengthened to three years; the obligation which cadets had assumed to follow a naval career was removed; and arrangements to receive cadets were made with the Admiralty and with certain universities.⁴² In 1915 the subjects taught were mathematics, navigation, mechanics, physics, chemistry, engineering, seamanship, pilotage, geo-

³⁹ In 1919 the staff consisted of: a commander, an instructor commander, an engineer commander, 2 instructor lieutenant-commanders, a paymaster lieutenant-commander, a lieutenant, an engineer lieutenant, 3 civilian masters, a chief boatswain, a boatswain, and a warrant writer.

⁴⁰ Material in N.S. 15-1-4.

⁴¹ In answer to a request made in Jan. 1911, the Naval Service was notified on Aug. 29 that: "His Majesty having been graciously pleased to authorize that the Canadian Naval Forces shall be designated the 'Royal Canadian Navy', this title is to be officially adopted, the abbreviation thereof being 'R.C.N.'" D. Min. to Under-Sec. of State (Ext. Aff.), Jan. 30, 1911; Col. Sec. to Gov. Gen., Aug. 16, 1911; N.S. 15-1-4.

⁴² P.C. 3281, Jan. 8, 1914; *House of Commons Debates*, 1914, IV, p. 3254.

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graphy, history, including naval history, English, French, and German.⁴³

The purely naval purpose of maintaining a reserve force is in order to provide economically a reinforcement of predictable size, consisting of partly-trained personnel, to meet the greatly increased needs which would be occasioned by a future war. In sailing days the Admiralty had been accustomed to take what extra men were required, as they were needed, from the merchant marine; but the technical revolution of the nineteenth century introduced a marked and increasing difference between the respective functions of the naval and the merchant sailor. Soon after the middle of that century it came to be realized that effective service in the navy demanded a considerable amount of special training even for merchant seamen. In 1853, accordingly, continuous service was introduced in the Royal Navy. A few years later the Royal Naval Volunteers were authorized: this body was composed of merchant sailors, and ultimately developed into the Royal Naval Reserve. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve was a later extension of the reserve system so as to include men who were not professional seamen. At the turn of the century it was decided to create the Royal Fleet Reserve, to consist of former naval seamen and marines, and steps were taken towards establishing naval reserves in the oversea possessions.⁴⁴

In Canada the creating of a naval reserve waited upon the forming of a navy. The Naval Service Act authorized the setting up of a Naval Reserve Force, which would have been a modified Fleet Reserve, and of a Naval Volunteer Force to be "raised by voluntary engagement from among seafaring men and others who may be deemed suitable for the service in which such volunteers are to be employed."⁴⁵ For some time no steps were taken to implement these sections of the Act; but in February 1912 it was suggested to the Prime Minister that the best way in which Canada could support the Royal Navy in the face of the German danger would be neither by contributing money nor by maintaining local fleet units, but by training an auxiliary naval force composed of fishermen. "They will be entirely under the Dominion Gov-

⁴³ *House of Commons Debates*, 1915, II, p. 1615.

⁴⁴ On this subject see Clowes, *The Royal Navy*, VII, pp. 18-19; Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, I, pp. 97-116.

⁴⁵ Secs. 19-21 and 26-31.

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ernment, simply passing by mutual agreement in the time of peace under the Admiralty for Man of War training in all details, and in time of war the Government will as may be desirable by Order in Council place them for active service in the Navy."⁴⁶ The following September the Dominion Government received a proposal from the west coast that a naval reserve should be formed from officers and seamen employed in those waters.⁴⁷ The idea was in the air, for other suggestions along similar lines were received by the government at this time.

In July 1913 a body of young men in Victoria, B.C., among whom Messrs. Stanley Geary, Lifton, and Ponder, Dr. Harper, and Lieut. Jarvis R.N.R., were moving spirits, decided that they would try to establish a naval volunteer force similar to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in Great Britain. Having obtained the support of a number of the leading professional and business men in the city, they then approached the Hon. J. D. Hazen, Minister of the Naval Service, who had come to Victoria in connection with the expected visit of H.M.S. *New Zealand*. The Minister encouraged them, and they received permission to use the facilities at Esquimalt for drill. On the arrival of the *New Zealand* some twenty of these pioneers were invited on board where the commanding officer, Capt. Lionel Halsey, went out of his way to emphasize the importance of what they were trying to do. They drilled periodically at the dockyard, and it was a great advantage to them that several officers and petty officers of the *Rainbow* had volunteered to act as instructors.⁴⁸ This small body of enthusiasts, who had no official status, no meeting-place of their own, and no pay-days, blazed the trail for all the official Canadian reserve organizations that were to follow.

In May 1914 the government established a Naval Volunteer Force by Order in Council under the provisions of the Naval Service Act.⁴⁹ The new organization received considerable criticism in Parliament from the Opposition, prin-

⁴⁶ Draft proposal by Lieut. Gen. I. Wimburn Laurie, enclosed in Mrs. Laurie to Borden Feb. 16, 1912, Borden Papers, O'C, No. 656.

⁴⁷ Sec., Merchant Service Guild of British Columbia, to Min., Marine and Fisheries, Sept. 20, 1912, N.S. 62-1-12.

⁴⁸ Enclosure in Capt. Hose to S. Brent, Feb. 19, 1919, N.S. 1000-5-5 (1); *House of Commons Debates*, 1914, II, p. 1914. For a more detailed and largely first-hand account of the Victoria volunteers during their unofficial period, see Longstaff, *Esquimalt Naval Base*, pp. 69-71.

⁴⁹ P.C. 1313, May 18, 1914.

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cipally on the ground that instead of strengthening the Canadian Naval Service, it would merely serve as an intake-pipe for the Royal Navy. The force was to consist of officers and ratings, enrolled as volunteers but engaging to serve in time of war. Enrolment was to be open to seafaring men and others who might be deemed suitable. The term of engagement was to be three years, with re-engagement for successive periods of three years up to the age of forty-five years. The authorized strength was twelve hundred men to be organized in three subdivisions. The Atlantic Subdivision included the area from the Atlantic coast inland to a line just west of the city of Quebec; from there the Lake Subdivision extended to beyond Brandon, Manitoba; while the whole area farther to the west formed the Pacific Subdivision. The force was to be organized in companies of a hundred men each. It was proposed to organize such companies in some of the large cities at first, and later in a number of the smaller centres as well. The already-existing unofficial unit in Victoria was, of course, to be taken into the new organization. Training was to include, as far as might be practicable, seamanship, company and field drill, torpedo and electrical instruction, engineering and stokehold work, signalling, wireless telegraphy, and first aid. Those volunteers who were seamen or fishermen in civil life were to receive all their training on shipboard. Of the others, those whose place of residence was such that they could easily receive part of their training on shipboard would do so, and the rest would be given only those types of training which could be given to them at their respective headquarters. The Admiralty was to be asked to provide instructional officers. Members of the force might be required in time of war to serve in ships of the Royal Canadian Navy or of the Royal Navy; as personnel for the examination, minesweeping, and other services at the defended ports; as signallers or wireless telegraphers in shore establishments; or as Intelligence officers. There were to be twenty-one days of training a year, or the equivalent in drills. The rates of pay for the officers would be the same as in the Royal Canadian Navy; those of the men were to be slightly higher so as to raise them approximately to the level of the rates offered by the militia. The initial annual expenditure required was estimated to be \$200,000.⁵⁰ Almost from the first the new organization was called the Royal Naval Canadian Volunteer Reserve.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; and explanation by Min. in *House of Commons Debates*, 1914, v, pp. 5148-9.

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The initiative in the forming of companies of the R.N.C.V.R. was left to those individuals who might wish to belong to that organization, no steps being taken by the Department to recruit, or to create company organizations in advance of an effective demand.⁵¹ In the summer of 1914 fifty members of the unofficial body of reservists in Victoria were embarked in the *Rainbow* for training, just in time to sail for Vancouver to support the civil power at the time of the *Komagata Maru* incident.⁵²

The transfer to Canadian ownership of the naval bases at Halifax and Esquimalt took place soon after the Naval Service Act had been passed. In March 1910, the Colonial Office forwarded a letter from the Admiralty, submitting draft Orders in Council to authorize the transfer of the two bases. It was suggested that the Order relating to Halifax should be submitted to Council as soon as possible. A wish had been expressed from Canada, however, to postpone the transfer of Esquimalt until after the anticipated passing of the Naval Service Bill: the Admiralty therefore proposed to submit the Order concerning the Pacific base as soon as the bill should have become law.⁵³ The Canadian authorities later proposed that the transfer of the Esquimalt base should await the arrival of the newly-acquired H.M.C.S. *Rainbow* at that port, and take place immediately thereafter;⁵⁴ and the Commander in Charge at Esquimalt was instructed accordingly by the Admiralty. The physical transfer of the properties at Esquimalt was made on November 9, 1910, two days after the arrival of the *Rainbow*. The sloops H.M.S. *Algerine* and H.M.S. *Shearwater* continued to be based at Esquimalt in order to discharge certain Admiralty commitments in the eastern Pacific.

The final authority for the transfer of Halifax and Esquimalt to the Canadian Government was embodied in two British Orders in Council.⁵⁵ The specified properties at the two ports were to be:

⁵¹ "Occasional Paper No. 12", Oct. 9, 1919, N.S. 1017-31-2 (1).

⁵² Enclosure in Hose to Brent, cited above.

⁵³ Admiral Kingsmill to Sec. of the Admiralty, Jan. 24, 1910, A.R.O. Council Office 13/10/10; Admiralty to C.O., Feb. 25, 1910, enclosed in Crewe to Grey, Mar. 9, 1910, N.S. 51-1-1 (1).

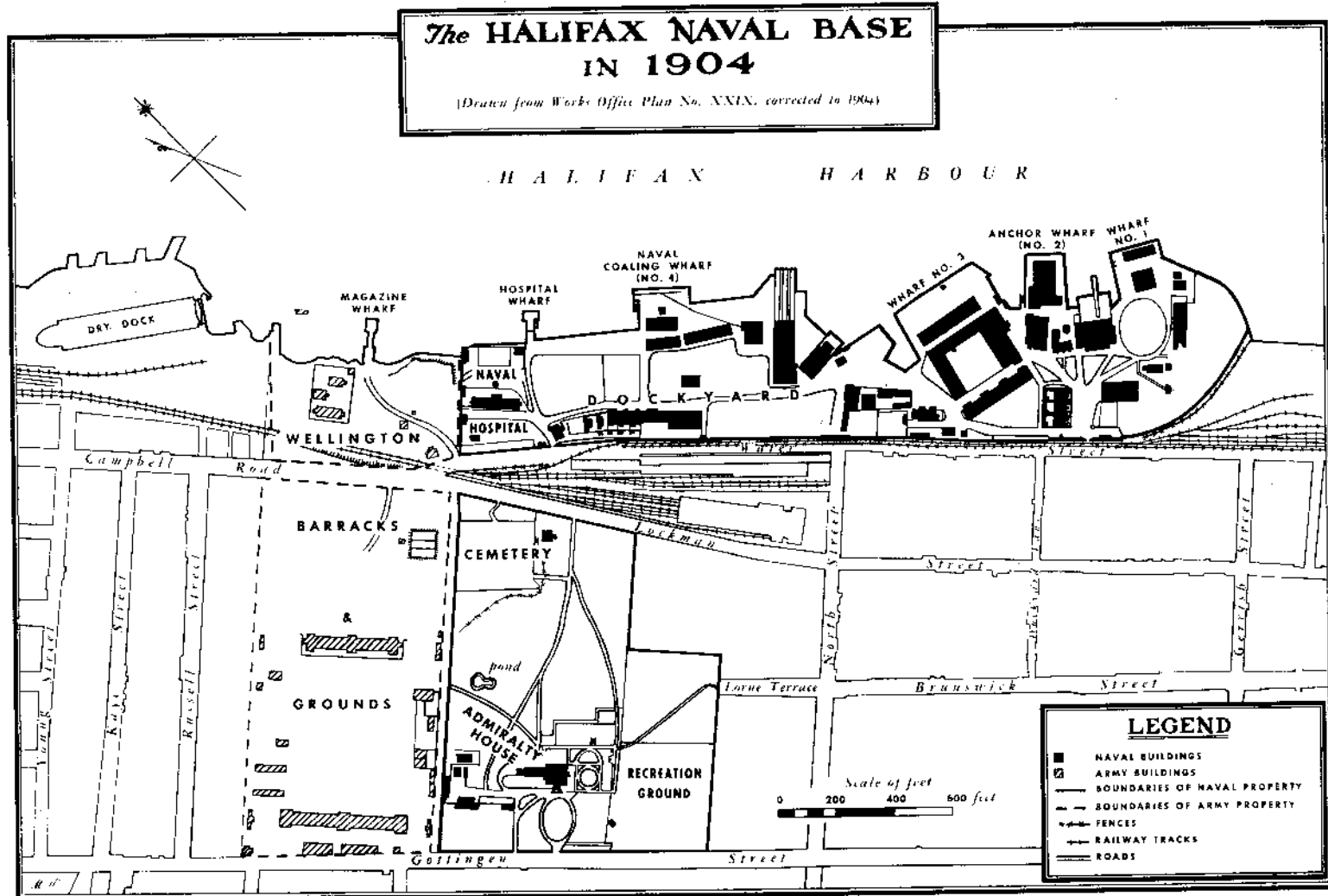
⁵⁴ D. Min. to Undersec. of State for Ext. Aff., July 5, 1910, N.S. 51-2-1 (1); P.C. 1613, Aug. 6, 1910.

⁵⁵ "The Canadian Naval Establishments (Halifax Dockyard) Order, 1910" and "The Canadian Naval Establishments (Esquimalt Dockyard) Order, 1911." These almost identical instruments were dated respectively Oct. 13, 1910, and May 4, 1911. The text of the first is given in App. VII.

PLATE IV

**The HALIFAX NAVAL BASE
IN 1904**

(Drawn from Works Office Plan No. XXIX, corrected to 1904)



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... vested in the Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada for all such estate and interest as is at the date of this Order vested in or held in trust for His Majesty or the Admiralty and for the public purposes of the Dominion ...

The conditions, summarized, were that the Canadian Government should maintain the existing naval facilities in usable condition, or provide others; be responsible for storing fuel and some other stores for the use of ships of the Royal Navy; permit the Royal Navy to use the workshops and appliances, subject to payment for labour and materials only; inform the Admiralty before devoting any of the properties to other than naval or army uses; be responsible for all existing liabilities, and enjoy any rent due from tenants and other incidental benefits; and be free, subject to the above conditions, to make such use of the properties as might seem desirable. Among the special commitments that went with the bases was the agreement with the Halifax Graving Dock Co., Ltd., dealt with earlier; and when the Canadian Government acquired the bases, four of the annual payments remained to be made.⁵⁶

The properties which were finally transferred by these Orders in Council were, as far as Halifax was concerned, the Royal Naval Dockyard and Hospital, the Commander in Chief's house and grounds, the recreation ground, and the cemetery. The corresponding properties at Esquimalt consisted of the Royal Naval Dockyard and Hospital, the naval coal stores and magazine, the recreation and drill ground, and the cemetery. Certain naval reserve lands on both coasts were transferred to Dominion authority by Order in Council on December 16, 1911. The assumption of Canadian custody over the bases and reserve lands was officially announced in the *Canada Gazette* of January 30, 1912.

The extraordinary delay which took place before the bases were actually transferred is curious in view of the willingness of both the parties, which sometimes amounted to eagerness, to effect the transfer of custody. It is probable that the long delays were largely due to the fact that, though the principals were thus agreed, the completion of the affair was never really urgent. As it was, the Admiralty merely paid maintenance charges throughout the period of delay, while the Dominion Government had a base on each coast by the time that the first two warships obtained to implement the Naval Service Act had reached their Canadian stations. The establishments

⁵⁶ Correspondence in N.S. 51-4-3 (1).

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which had been taken over were small repair and fuelling bases, somewhat run down and with part of their equipment obsolescent; yet they were most valuable properties obtained by Canada free of charge.

It was a matter of consequence that Canada, at the time when she was embarking upon a naval policy of her own, came into possession of a naval base on each of the oceans toward which she faced. The acquisition of the Halifax and Esquimalt bases placed the Dominion in a position where her government, asking for money with which to create or maintain a naval force, was able to propose that nearly all the expenditure should be devoted to the most obviously relevant purpose—ships and men. The existence of the bases at Halifax and Esquimalt also relieved the government of the embarrassment of having to favour one among several rival interests in choosing a site. The two establishments had been acquired from the British Government on condition that they should be maintained as naval bases, and that ships of the Royal Navy might use them at all times. In accepting them on these terms Canada committed itself to a considerable extent in two important ways. The ownership of bases suggests the advisability of owning warships as well; consequently the possession of these establishments by the Dominion made it more likely than it would otherwise have been that a Canadian naval force, no matter how small, would continue to be maintained. The special status of the two bases after their acquisition, moreover, apart from all other considerations, would make it very difficult, as long as the agreement stood, for Canada to remain neutral in a subsequent imperial war against an important naval power.

The dockyard at Halifax which the Canadian authorities had taken over was a reasonably complete and well-constructed plant, whose equipment, however, was largely obsolescent. A committee was set up to consider what steps should be taken by the Naval Service for the defence of Halifax in time of war or strained relations. On November 25, 1911, this defence committee recommended the blocking of the eastern channel by sinking about six local schooners across it; the installing of certain net and boom defences; a guard for the dockyard; a harbour patrol by naval steamboats on each side of George Island; and the establishing of an examination service.⁵⁷ In May 1912 the Overseas Defence Committee concurred in

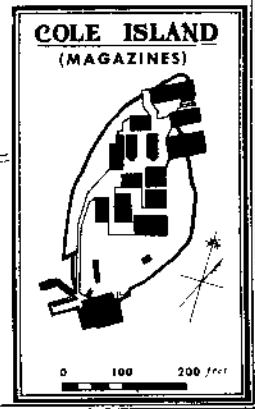
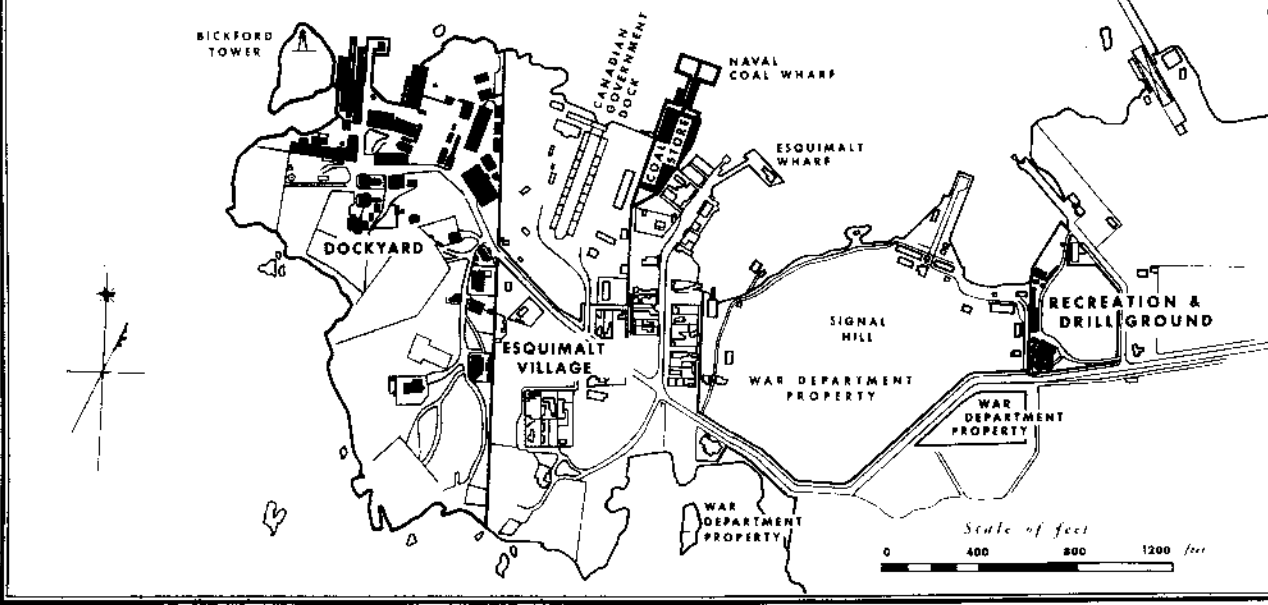
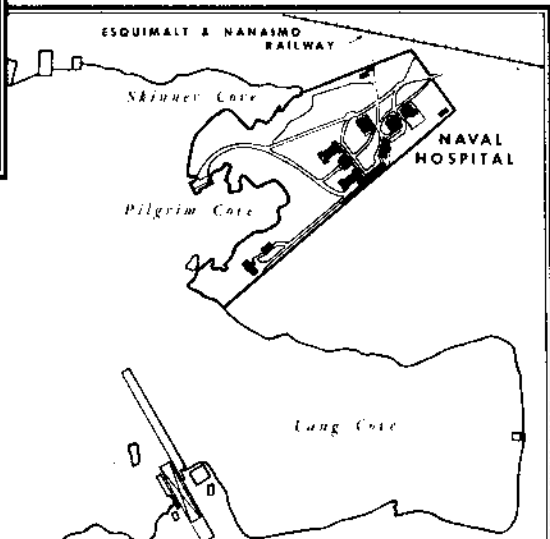
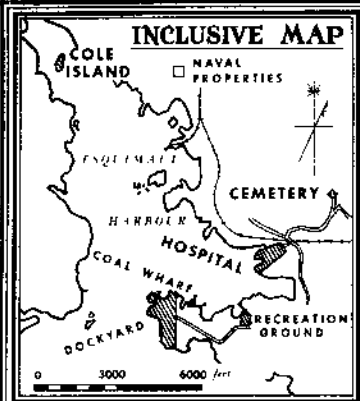
⁵⁷ Report in N.S. 1001-1-2 (1).

PLATE V

**The ESQUIMALT
NAVAL BASE
IN 1903**
(Drawn from Works Office Plan
No. XLI. 1893, corrected to 1903)

LEGEND

- NAVAL BUILDINGS
- BUILDINGS OTHER THAN NAVAL
- BOUNDARIES OF NAVAL PROPERTY
- ⋯ ROADS



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these recommendations. Details connected with the defence of the port were still being reviewed in 1914, and when war came, although much thought had been bestowed upon the defence of Halifax, no complete arrangements to that end had been made.

The cruiser-destroyer shipbuilding programme was an essential part of the general policy. An unsigned, undated memorandum among Laurier's papers, obviously written by well-informed persons, pointed out the great difficulties which were inherent in any attempt to do the building in Canada, inasmuch as the Dominion possessed no suitable shipbuilding or marine-engineering establishments. To meet the views of the government it was suggested that the construction of a shipyard in Canada should be begun. At the same time two cruisers and two destroyers should be laid down in Great Britain, while skilled Canadian workers would be sent to help in building them. As a further means towards increasing the supply of skilled shipyard workers available in Canada, a number of such workers should be encouraged to come from Britain. As soon as the Canadian yard should be ready the succeeding four ships would be laid down there, certain of their important parts being imported ready-made. It was hoped that the last three units of the programme could be wholly constructed and equipped in Canada.⁵³

The government decided, nevertheless, to build all the ships in Canada, accepting the disadvantages which would result. This policy was defended principally on the ground that it would encourage the development of a shipbuilding industry. The disadvantages were that the ships would be built much more slowly, and cost considerably more, than if they had been constructed in British yards. These drawbacks resulted from the lack of shipbuilding plants and subsidiary industries as well as of specialized engineers and workers, and from the relatively high level of wages in the Dominion.

The Admiralty's specifications would have to be used. Accordingly the first step to be taken was to ascertain whether or not the Admiralty would object to firms not on its approved list having access to these specifications. To this question which was put on March 4, 1910, the Admiralty replied that they were anxious to help in every possible way; but that as the specifications of the latest types of warship were highly

⁵³ Laurier Papers, "Navy Bill--Power to Legislate", Pub. Arch., EE2.

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confidential, they would wish to know the names of any firms in Canada to which it was proposed to give this information. The Admiralty also wanted to have one of their own overseers present in any yard where the specifications were being used, and to be assured that the Dominion authorities would rigidly enforce the law against any breach of secrecy. To these conditions the Canadian Government agreed.⁵⁹

The terms required the construction of four Bristol-class cruisers of the improved Weymouth type, and of six river-class destroyers of the improved Acorn type. It had been decided to substitute the *Niobe* for the *Boadicea* of the original programme.⁶⁰ The first cruiser was to be finished within three years of the signing of the contract, and another one each following year. The first two destroyers were to be delivered within three years, and additional ones at nine-month intervals thereafter. The programme was to be completed within six years, and all the ships were to be built in the Dominion. Certain rules were to be complied with, which covered the conditions of labour. The ships might be built on either coast; but it was pointed out that the Rush-Bagot agreement prohibited the construction of warships on the Great Lakes. For obvious reasons it was intended that one firm should build all the ships. After considerable delay the deadline for tenders was set at May 1, 1911.

A shipbuilding firm considering the advisability of tendering for this contract had to reckon with the difficulty and initial expense of establishing a new yard under imperfectly-known conditions. On the other hand the contract was a fairly large one, and the prospect of subsequent orders, which would serve to keep the new yard busy after this one had been filled, while it was uncertain, may well have seemed good. It was doubtless a consideration also that the Canadian Parliament, with the needs of the Naval Service in mind, had recently passed a law to encourage the construction of dry docks. This Act empowered the government to grant a generous subsidy to any suitable firm willing to build a dry dock in Canada which would serve the public interest. The maximum subsidy provided for was 3½% annually of the

⁵⁹ Correspondence in A.R.O., S.6673/1912, "Canadian Shipbuilding Programme."

⁶⁰ The *Boadiceas* were small, very fast cruisers, intended to act as parent ships for destroyers. They drew criticism as representing too great a sacrifice of armament to speed. See *Brassey's Naval Annual*: 1908, p. 4; 1911, p. 6; 1912, p. 27.

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cost of the work for a period of thirty-five years.⁶¹ By the beginning of 1911 nineteen firms had corresponded with the Department with a view to tendering for the ships. Three of these firms, the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company, the Polson Iron Works, and the British Columbia Marine Railway Company, were Canadian firms. The others were concerns in Great Britain, some of which bore names which were among the most famous in shipbuilding. Seven tenders were actually received. Six of these undertook to build the ships in Canada, which meant, of course, that they were prepared to establish plants in the Dominion. One firm, the Thames Iron Works, tendered by mistake on the assumption that the ships would be built at its yard in England. One Canadian firm offered a tender; it planned to establish and equip the necessary works, in which the ships would be built under the direction and control of two distinguished British firms.

The highest tender was for \$13,055,804; the lowest for ships to be built in Canada was \$11,280,000. Of all the tenders the median came from the association of Canadian and British companies. The Thames Iron Works' tender was for \$8,532,504; the average of the other six was \$12,421,412.⁶² These two last figures, no doubt, measure approximately the extra cost at that time of doing the work in the Dominion, and confirm the prediction on this point which Laurier had made in the House of Commons. In the difficulties inherent in planning for a construction programme which involved the establishing of an industry as well as the building of ships, the Canadian Government had the benefit of the Admiralty's unrivalled experience in these matters, which was freely placed at their disposal. The numerous negotiations which had to be completed before a contract could be signed, however, consumed much time. In the general election of September 1911 the government was defeated, and in October an Order in Council decreed "that in view of the magnitude of the transaction the question of awarding the contract be left to the incoming administration."⁶³

In the spring of 1911, while the Laurier government was still in power, was held the last imperial conference to meet

⁶¹ *9-10 Edw. VII*, c. 17. Like the Naval Service Act this was assented to on May 4, 1910. Canadian warships and those of the Royal Navy were to enjoy priority, when necessary, in the use of such subsidized dry docks.

⁶² The tenders did not include armour plate, armament, and certain fittings usually supplied by the Admiralty, but included the fitting of these on board the vessels.

⁶³ P.C. 2414, Oct. 6, 1911.

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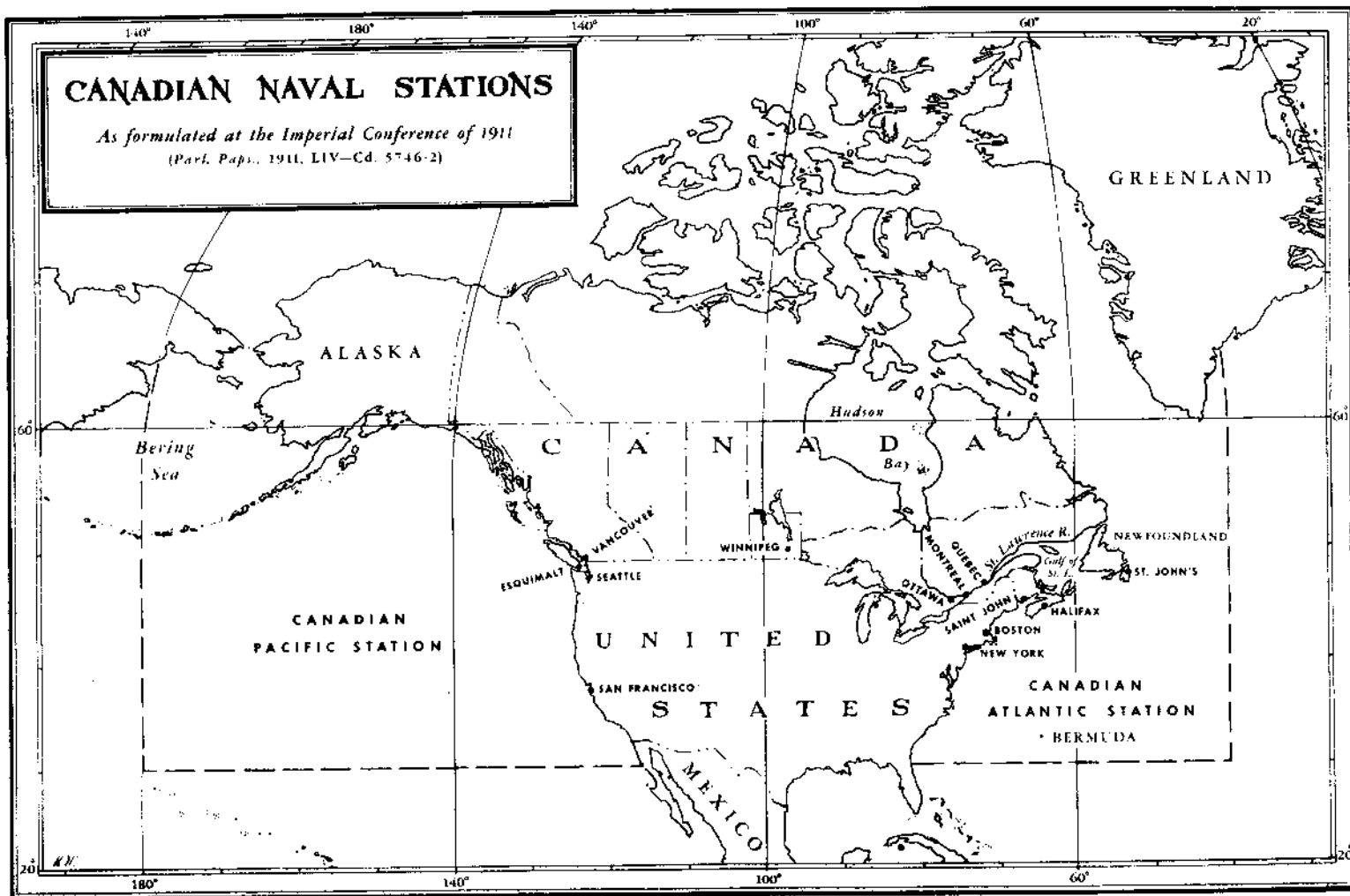
before the First World War. Two naval subjects were discussed, a project for a centrally-controlled imperial navy, and policy for co-ordinating the methods and status of the navies in the Empire. At this conference Asquith and Harcourt, the latter being Colonial Secretary, represented Great Britain, while Laurier, Sir Frederick Borden, and Brodeur, were the Canadian members.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand advocated an imperial parliament of defence, on which Britain and the Dominions would be represented according to population. This body would determine the naval needs of the Empire, and levy annual contributions for that purpose upon the member States. This scheme received practically no support from the conference, however, and was withdrawn.⁶⁴

While the agenda for the conference was being worked out, the Australian Government had asked for a discussion on the related subjects of the status of the Dominion navies and co-operation between the naval and land forces of the Empire. During the conference a meeting composed of Admiralty officials and Australian and Canadian representatives was accordingly held. The agreement which was reached, and which affected the navies of both Dominions, was as follows. The naval Services and forces of both Dominions were to be controlled exclusively by their respective governments. Their training and discipline were to be generally the same as, and personnel interchangeable with, those of the Royal Navy. The Dominions, having already adopted the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions and the Naval Discipline Act, would communicate with the British Government should they desire any changes in the regulations or in the Act. The Admiralty agreed to lend to the younger Services, during their infancy, whatever flag officers and other officers and men might be needed, such personnel to be, as far as possible, from or connected with the Dominion concerned, and in any case to be volunteers. The service of any officer of the Royal Navy in a Dominion ship, or the converse, was to count for the purposes of retirement, pay, and promotion, as if it had been performed in that officer's own force. Canadian and Australian naval stations were created and defined: the Canadian Atlantic Station covered the waters north of 30° N. and west of 40° W., except for certain waters off Newfoundland, and

⁶⁴ Cd. 5745, "Minutes of Proceedings of the Imperial Conference, 1911," pp. 46-75, *Parl. Papers*, 1911, LIV.

PLATE VI



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the Canadian Pacific Station included the part of that ocean north of 30° N. and east of the 180th meridian. The Admiralty would be notified whenever it was intended to send Dominion warships outside their own stations, and a Dominion government, before sending one of its ships to a foreign port, would obtain the concurrence of the British Government. The commanding officer of a Dominion warship in a foreign port would carry out the instructions of the British Government in the event of any international question arising, in which case the government of the Dominion concerned would be informed. A Dominion warship entering a foreign port without a previous arrangement, because of an emergency, would report her reasons for having put in, to the Commander in Chief of that station or to the Admiralty. It was agreed that in the case of a ship of the Royal Navy meeting a Dominion warship, the senior officer should command in any ceremony or intercourse or where united action should have been decided upon; but not so as to interfere with the execution of any orders which the junior might have received from his own government. In order to remove any uncertainty about seniority, Dominion officers would be shown in the Navy List. In the event of there being too few officers of the necessary rank belonging to a Dominion Service to complete a court martial ordered by that Service, the Admiralty undertook to make the necessary arrangements if requested to do so. In the interest of efficiency Dominion warships were to take part from time to time in fleet exercises with ships of the Royal Navy, under the command of the senior officer, who was not, however, to interfere further than necessary with the internal economy of the Dominion ships concerned. Australian and Canadian warships would fly the white ensign at the stern and the flag of the Dominion at the jack-staff. "In time of war, when the naval service of a Dominion, or any part thereof, has been put at the disposal of the Imperial Government by the Dominion authorities, the ships will form an integral part of the British fleet, and will remain under the control of the British Admiralty during the continuance of the war."⁶⁵ These arrangements were put into effect, and governed thenceforth, within the period covered by this volume, the status of the Australian and Canadian navies and the relationship of these Services to the Royal Navy.

⁶⁵ Cd. 5746-2, No. 1, "Memorandum of Conferences between the British Admiralty and Representatives of . . . Canada and . . . Australia", *ibid.*

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The attempts at the colonial and imperial conferences to achieve a jointly-financed programme for Imperial defence, drawn in terms of central military control and a general imperial convergence, were made in vain. The obstacles which this policy failed to surmount were: the growing sense of local nationalism in the larger Dominions; a feeling of care-free dependence in the smaller ones; and the fact that the possible external threats, to meet which armed forces are usually provided, were or seemed to be far less menacing in some parts of the Empire than in others. The naval arguments for undivided control, and the view that the financial burden should be distributed approximately according to the strength of the various shoulders concerned, did not prevail against arguments which took more account of the special environment, outlook, and immediate needs, of each part of the Empire. It is an exceedingly significant fact that Australia, highly sensitive to the need of preparations for defence, almost all of whose people were of British origin, and whose financial contributions to the Royal Navy had never constituted a heavy burden, should have abandoned contributions after more than twenty years' experience with them, and turned to the development of a local navy.

The point of view which Canada had expressed so unwaveringly at all the conferences was the Australian way of thinking modified by three special circumstances. One of these was the proximity of the United States with its decisive military superiority in North America and its Monroe Doctrine. Another was the fact that any concentration of the Royal Navy, adequate in size and disposition to protect the British Isles from invasion or blockade, was *ipso facto* capable of covering the routes by which alone any European enemy could reach the shores of Canada. The third was the diversity of opinion among Canadians regarding almost all aspects of external policy. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's course throughout was the greatest common factor of Canadian opinions.

The solution which was eventually found for the problem was a compromise. Like most compromises it fell short of perfection from any theoretical point of view. It had, however, the sterling merit of meeting very largely the demands of those who wanted specifically Dominion navies, of the advocates of imperial fleets which would act as one, and of those who had protested that the Dominions were doing almost nothing for their own or imperial naval defence. Perhaps the most

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striking features of the conferences, as far as naval defence is concerned, were the seriousness of the difficulties which the problem presented, and the combination of good will and persistence with which an answer was sought. The solution itself was a masterpiece of resourceful statecraft.