

Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs

No. 6



Royal Australian Navy
Maritime Studies Program

Australia's Naval Inheritance

Imperial Maritime
Strategy and the
Australia Station
1880–1909



Nicholas A. Lambert

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General Editor

David Stevens

The 'Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs' series is a vehicle for the distribution of substantial work by members of the Royal Australian Navy as well as members of the Australian and international community undertaking original research into regional maritime issues. Papers will be drawn generally from manuscripts not scheduled for publication elsewhere but that nonetheless merit extensive distribution. An editorial board under the auspices of the Director General Maritime Studies Program considers candidates.

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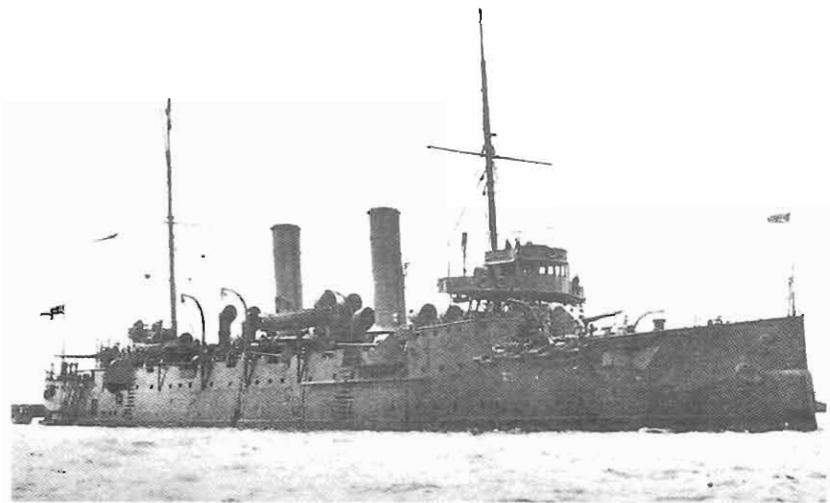
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The second-class protected cruiser HMS Cambrian, last flagship of the Australia Station, pictured in 1910. (AWM 302155)

Abstract

The object of this volume is to provide readers with the essential documents relating to the rationale and organisation of the naval forces on the Australia Station before the formal creation of the Royal Australian Navy in 1911. The documents chosen show, firstly, that expert opinion always believed that Australia's overriding defence concern was the protection of seaborne trade. A succession of naval authorities all insisted that Australia's interests were most vulnerable—and could be attacked by a hostile power most decisively—through the interdiction of maritime commerce. The volume also seeks to explore the relationship between the British Admiralty in London and successive Australian governments, and to explain the reasoning behind the British advice (often found unpalatable) to State and later Commonwealth ministers. The documents demonstrate why, before 1909, the Admiralty was invariably justified in rejecting various proposals for the creation of a maritime defence force submitted by Captain (later Vice Admiral) Sir William Creswell and others, mainly on the grounds that they omitted to consider the all-important question of naval personnel.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part draws most of its content from reports by senior British officers and closes with the Imperial Defence Act of 1888 and the formation of the Australian Auxiliary Squadron. During this period the key themes in Australian naval debates were finance and force capability. The second and third parts focus on the Commonwealth era. Initially the Federal Government resolved that continuing to subsidise the Royal Navy presence in Australian waters was the most economical means of securing effective protection of Australian interests. But steadily increasing pressure, from members of the old naval brigades in particular, obliged statesmen to consider the establishment of an independent national force. For some Australians, the assuming of full political control of Australian naval units was more important than the issue of force capability.

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Abbreviations

AWM	Australian War Memorial
BL	breech loading
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CDC	Colonial Defence Committee
CID	<i>Committee of Imperial Defence</i>
CO	Colonial Office
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence
ERA	Engine Room Artificer
GL	<i>Gunlayer</i>
GM	Gunner's Mate
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
HMS	Her (His) Majesty's Ship
HP	horse power
LS	<i>Leading Seaman</i>
LTO	Leading Torpedo Man
MP	Member of Parliament
NAA	National Archives of Australia
PO	Petty Officer
PRO	Public Record Office, London
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RN	Royal Navy
RNR	Royal Naval Reserve
SG	Seaman Gunner
ST	Seaman Torpedo Man
TC	Torpedo Coxswain
TGM	Torpedo Gunner's Mate



Sydney Harbour 1881. A panoramic view from Ball's Head looking across Berry's Bay towards Bennelong Point. Merchant ships ride at anchor off Berry's Bay. Their protectors, the ships of the Royal Navy's Australia Squadron, are at upper left. (AWM 304425)

Introduction

The Royal Australian Navy can trace its ancestry back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Under the Colonial Defence Act ratified by the British Parliament in 1865, *the States, or self-governing colonies as they were then called, were empowered to purchase and operate warships for defensive purposes inside their territorial waters.* Though two of the colonies had owned a warship before this date, the legitimacy of these craft was tenuous.¹ The first Australian colony to take advantage of the 1865 legislation and establish a permanent naval force was Victoria, which in 1867 raised a naval militia from local volunteers and acquired from the Royal Navy the old wooden ship-of-the-line *Nelson* to serve as a training vessel. Three years later, with a subvention from the British Admiralty representing four-fifths of the cost, the colony took delivery of a more modern warship, the *Cerberus*, a 3350-ton coastal defence monitor. Her primary role was to act as a floating battery to protect Melbourne from bombardment by guarding the entrance to Port Phillip. Subsequent attempts by Victoria and the other self-governing colonies to procure additional warships, however, were thwarted by the reluctance of local taxpayers to finance their purchase and a refusal by the British Government to provide further financial assistance. No further progress was made until 1880–81, when Victoria placed orders in Britain for a number of torpedo-boats, and New South Wales became the second Australian colony to establish a naval defence force after purchasing from the Royal Navy the old screw-corvette *Wolverene*.

During the mid-1880s, Victoria and New South Wales continued to strengthen their squadrons. Queensland and New South Wales also purchased a number of gunboats and raised militias. The Australian self-governing colonies very quickly discovered that owning a navy was a more expensive business than they had imagined. Establishing a naval force was not, and is not, just a matter of purchasing warships.² Maintaining, repairing, and operating warships in the machine age was a complex and expensive business. It demanded the commitment of scarce and valuable industrial resources that the late-nineteenth century colonies could ill-afford to spare. The magnitude of the costs involved meant that the colonies were able to develop their naval support infrastructure only very slowly. Despite British technical support, access to the Royal Navy's docking and refit facilities in Sydney, and the supply of equipment at almost cost price, the colonies were unable to keep their ships in continuous commission. In 1884, for example, the Commodore of the British squadron at Sydney informed the Admiralty that the *Cerberus*'s boilers were unserviceable and unlikely to be quickly replaced.

¹ The screw sloop *Victoria* and ketch *Spitfire* were completed in 1855 for Victoria and New South Wales respectively.

² For an excellent analysis of the difficulties in establishing new navies during the second half of the twentieth century see: J. Goldrick, *No Easy Answers: The Development of the Navies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, 1945-1996*. (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1997). Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs No. 2.

The colonies also found that the most important and most expensive component of a navy is the personnel. Naval service has always been a highly specialised profession. Officers and ratings are called upon to undertake the operation and often routine servicing of sophisticated equipment. The state must entice citizens of above average ability to commit to a long and expensive period of training—and, most importantly, once they have been trained to remain in the service. The state must therefore offer their naval personnel good rates of pay, attractive terms of service, constant intellectual stimulation, with fair prospects of advancement and promotion. Unless the state can offer citizens a life-career in naval service, it simply will not be able to raise and retain the high calibre personnel necessary to operate warships efficiently. During the nineteenth century, the colonies relied upon part-time militiamen to crew their warships. They were of course no substitute for properly trained ratings, but at this time could fight their warships with reasonable efficiency provided they were seasoned with a cadre of professionals and were kept well drilled. Unfortunately, the colonial navies encountered great difficulties in finding the necessary qualified officers, weapon specialists, and instructors. And this problem of poor quality leadership was never really overcome before 1910. The consequence was a generally poor level of efficiency among the personnel.

It was perhaps unfortunate that the Australian colonies attempted to establish their navies at a time when naval science and engineering were progressing at an unparalleled rate. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century warships became obsolete almost as soon as they were launched. Keeping a naval force up-to-date always demands a long-term commitment from taxpayers to pay for the frequent replacement of warships or at the very least the continuous modernisation of existing craft. At no time during the nineteenth century, moreover, did the colonial legislatures accept such a commitment, and consequently the military effectiveness of colonial warships depreciated rapidly. Technical progress also had an impact upon the personnel. The growing sophistication of naval weaponry led to the inclusion of a steadily larger proportion of skilled ratings in a warship's complement. At the same time the skills of existing personnel became obsolete and sometimes redundant. The net result was that the relative value of militiamen as compared with full-time professionals declined sharply. During the 1890s the rapidity of technological change undermined the (real) efforts made to raise the efficiency of Australian part-time naval personnel, to the extent that in January 1899 the Admiralty noted the efficiency of Colonial Naval personnel was visibly slipping.³ By the turn of the century the battle had been lost; ships manned largely by volunteers were simply no match for those crewed by fully trained professionals.

Another hindrance to the growth of the colonial navies was the shadow cast by the Royal Navy. It was not so much that the British deliberately raised obstacles to the development of local navies—though most British naval officers regarded the colonial forces with little respect and few were keen to see them thrive. The problem was more subtle: the Royal Navy was the most illustrious fighting force in the world

³ For a typical example see: Minute (4 January 1899) by Lewis Beaumont (DNI) on 'Report of Inspection of Victorian Naval Forces', 11 November 1898, in 'Australia and New Zealand', CO 4/9/1897, Public Record Office (PRO): ADM 1/7341.

and set the standard by which all other navies were judged. The ever-present British squadron at Sydney not only outshone the colonial forces at every turn, but more fundamentally it served as a constant reminder to the Australian tax-payers of Britain's global naval supremacy. Also, that ultimately the security of their territory and trade depended upon the squadrons of the Royal Navy. So long as confidence in the Royal Navy remained high, in other words, the Australian public remained unwilling to assume the burden of supporting a proper navy of their own.

The Admiralty

To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, in London, it was never very clear why the Australian colonies so adamantly demanded greater naval protection. Their Lordships certainly did not share the concerns expressed by the colonists at the steady expansion of rival European empires in the Pacific.⁴ Understandably: no other power possessed the capability to sustain a naval campaign in the Southern Hemisphere. None had the base facilities and above all the coaling stations necessary to conduct operations with modern warships.⁵ In April 1880, the secretary to the Admiralty requested Commodore John Wilson RN,⁶ officer commanding the Australian squadron, to identify and address the fundamental strategical questions governing the maritime defence of Australia in the age of steam. Wilson interpreted his remit to consider only the 'most probable' form of attacks on the Australian colonies, and based his analysis and recommendations firmly upon this assumption. In his report the Commodore confirmed that 'the distance problem' ruled out the possibility attacks from armour-clad warships [document 1]. Quite simply they were incapable of carrying enough coal to reach the antipodes, and the only coaling stations located in the region were British owned. The other assumption he made—which again was perfectly reasonable—was that so long as the Royal Navy retained command of the seas invasion would remain impossible. This did not mean that Wilson thought Australasia was immune from maritime attack. Trade between the colonies and the mother-country was valuable and more than sufficient to tempt hostile auxiliary cruisers—steam ships fitted with guns—to raid Australian waters. In Wilson's opinion the Admiralty seemed altogether too sanguine at protecting the oceanic trade routes to Australia. He pointed out that none of the warships presently attached to the Australia Squadron for peacetime constabulary duties possessed the speed or endurance for wartime trade defence missions. Modern cruisers, he advised, were needed.

The boldest suggestion contained in Commodore Wilson's report was the suggestion that the Australian colonies themselves might assist not only with their 'local defence' but also in the protection of oceanic seaborne trade. He conceded, though, this could not be attempted unless the colonies agreed to co-ordinate their

⁴ For the idea that the British Government ignored 'Australian interests' when framing foreign policy see: N. Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific*, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), pp. 1–35.

⁵ 'First Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad', vol. 1., September 1881, Admiralty Library, London.

⁶ Admiral John Crawford Wilson, Officer commanding Australia Station 1878–82.

naval efforts and reform the existing militia organisations. Although Wilson was quick to praise the enthusiasm of the state of Victoria in establishing a 'well-drilled' local naval force, like his predecessors he was contemptuous of its leadership and overall efficiency. According to Wilson the local politicians were largely to blame. They not only lacked commitment to the naval defence force—it was constantly 'on the brink of disbandment', he claimed—but furthermore many appointments to the force depended upon the exercise of local political patronage. Although he accepted that the colonies should continue to develop their harbour defence force, Wilson was anxious to see them take steps towards assisting in the protection of sea-borne trade. Purpose built cruisers were of course too expensive to build and run, and volunteers could not operate them efficiently; but Australian seamen could certainly man armed merchant-cruisers. With hindsight, Wilson's analysis of the position appears to have been sound and his proposals both affordable and practicable.

The next British officer to consider the maritime defence of Australia in any depth was Captain Cyprian Bridge,⁷ who commanded the sloop *Espiègle* between 1881 and 1885. Bridge was something of a naval intellectual; he wrote books on naval tactics and contributed articles to journals and newspapers. While serving on the Australia Station, Bridge devoted his spare time to gathering data and considering the practicalities of fighting a war in the region. In a letter to the Admiralty dated January 1883 [document 3], he convincingly demonstrated the logistical impossibility of a hostile power either passing an invasion convoy across the Indian Ocean or dispatching an armoured squadron into Australian waters. The principal threat to Australian interests, Bridge concluded, was to commerce. His statistics indicated that the value of seaborne trade in the region was enormous. Bridge estimated that the protection of oceanic trade would require at least fourteen cruisers—more than double the strength of the existing Australia Squadron—with additional auxiliary vessels to protect the coastal trade. Echoing the views of Commodore John Wilson, Bridge suggested that the colonists themselves might help patrol the coastal trade routes in armed merchant cruisers.

In August 1883, the Admiralty received another paper on the naval defence of Australia forwarded by the new Commodore commanding the Australia Station, James Erskine.⁸ Written by F.T. Sargood,⁹ the minister in charge of defence matters for Victoria, this was the first report by an Australian to be 'approved generally' by the Board.¹⁰ In his report [document 4], Sargood pointed out that very shortly the State of Victoria would be taking delivery of a number of warships and the guns to arm half a dozen merchant cruisers, but so far had no real ideas on what to do with them. What concerned him more, however, was the transparent inefficiency of the naval defence force personnel. Sargood argued that the only imaginable way of raising

⁷ Admiral Sir Cyprian Arthur Bridge (1839–1924), C-in-C Australia Station 1895–98, retired list 1904.

⁸ Admiral of the Fleet Sir James Elphinstone Erskine (1838–1911), Commodore commanding Australia Station 1882–85, retired list 1908.

⁹ Sir Frederick Thomas Sargood (1834–1903). Joined Victorian Volunteer Artillery as a private in 1859 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

¹⁰ Minute (2 November 1883) by Admiral Cooper Key, on report by Commodore James Erskine, 7 August 1883. PRO: ADM 116/68, f.4.

standards was to ask the imperial government to provide, or to hire out, Royal Navy personnel as instructors. This idea was not new. Several naval officers, including Bridge, had proposed it. And it also appealed to the Senior Naval Lord, who three months later decreed that half-pay Royal Naval officers could accept temporary employment with the colonial services without forfeiting their pensions.¹¹ Victoria subsequently recruited an RN post-Captain and a Commander.¹²

In forwarding Sargood's report to the Admiralty, Commodore Erskine took the opportunity to express his view on the subject. He was convinced that the colonies must give up their costly armoured vessels and instead concentrate their efforts on building an 'economical and efficient' force of torpedo craft for harbour defence. Erskine pointed out that armoured craft such as *Cerberus* were a drain upon the colonies' limited manpower and financial resources. For the cost of new boilers for that ship, he estimated, two torpedo boats could be bought instead. The Commodore was also concerned, however, that ocean-going vessels operated by the colonies 'might possibly be used in a direction which would not only tend to embarrass the Colonial Authorities but which might lead to imperial complications'. In-so-doing he reminded their Lordships of the incident earlier that year, when a gunboat belonging to Queensland had hoisted a flag in New Guinea and, without first warning London, claimed the island for the British Empire. Encouraging the colonies to buy torpedo craft and accumulating guns and mountings for armed merchant cruisers, Erskine thought, would not only avoid potential future embarrassment but would anyway prove more cost effective and more useful to the Royal Navy.¹³

By 1884, there was a consensus in Britain and the colonies that the maritime defences of Australia required strengthening and reorganisation. That October, the Senior Naval Lord of the Admiralty, Admiral Sir Astley Cooper Key, opened negotiations by circulating a memorandum offering what he termed 'a more intimate connection' between the colonial forces and the Royal Navy [document 6].¹⁴ Key commended the 'spirit and patriotism' of those colonies that had already founded naval militia units. Nevertheless, he continued, those forces were not efficient largely because they were manned by untrained personnel.¹⁵ On behalf of the Admiralty, Cooper Key offered to take over the organising, training, and day-to-day running of these forces. In addition, colonial personnel would be recognized as part of the Royal Navy. All that was asked in return was that the colonies pay the bills. It seems that Key's object was not, as several historians have asserted, to see the Admiralty snatch control of the colonial navies. The Senior Naval Lord was prepared to allow the vessels to remain 'appropriated to the defence of the port to which they belong' and to remain under the operational control of the local senior naval officer. Key was motivated, rather, by a genuine wish to help improve the efficiency of the local navies by providing experienced professional administrators and instructors.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Admiralty to C-in-C Portsmouth, 10 September 1891, CO 12 December 1891. 'Victorian Naval Defence Force', PRO: ADM 1/7077.

¹³ Commodore James Erskine to Admiralty, 7 August 1883, PRO: ADM 116/68, f.9-10.

¹⁴ Admiralty to Colonial Office, 4 May 1885, PRO: ADM 116/68, f.115.

¹⁵ Key, 'Naval Defence of our Colonies', 28 October 1884, PRO: ADM 116/68, f.217.

In November 1884, Key discussed the Australia question with Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon,¹⁶ who was due to relieve Erskine in Australia early the following year [document 7].¹⁷ Tryon already knew much about the subject having previously served as Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty and thus in a position to have seen the correspondence to and from Australia. Tryon, incidentally, was the first flag officer to be appointed to command the Australia Squadron and be given the status and authority of a Commander-in-Chief. His brief from Cooper Key was to initiate discussions with the various heads of government in the colonies; to consider how best to incorporate the personnel of the naval defence forces - either as regulars or as reservists; and most importantly to find out how much money the colonies would ultimately be willing to pay to support their navies.

Tryon arrived at Sydney in early 1885. Preliminary inspections of the colonial naval forces led him quickly to conclude that the Royal Navy should have nothing to do with them. His advice was that 'each colony should undertake its own harbour defence, obtaining from England such officers as may be deemed necessary, either to superintend the works or to give practical instruction to volunteers'.¹⁸ But what the colonies really needed, Tryon agreed with his predecessors, Wilson and Erskine, was some force to protect their sea-going trade. It seems that initially he too favoured the idea of establishing a naval reserve to man locally fitted-out armed merchant cruisers. Tryon's arrival in Australia coincided with a scare that the colonies might become dragged into a possible war between Russia and the British Empire and immediately on landing he took steps to commission a number of armed merchant cruisers. The first to be converted was the *Lusitania*; but though her regular officers at once volunteered to join the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) for the duration of hostilities and agreed to serve under a Royal Navy officer, the Australian crew refused and combined to demand colonial rates of pay. Tryon and the Admiralty were disgusted and preparations were made to send out crews from the United Kingdom. But the crisis passed before the extra men arrived. This incident left a deep impression in the minds of many British naval officers (including Tryon, it seems,) as to the reliability of colonial seamen.¹⁹ More immediately it left the Cooper Key scheme for Anglo-Australian naval co-operation in tatters, and Tryon without a plan.

In March 1885, Tryon submitted a draft paper to the Governor-General that called for the colonies to augment the Australia Squadron by paying for the construction of several trade-protection cruisers [document 8]. In order to be efficient, he insisted they be manned by professional crews. This meant, in effect, the Royal Navy would provide and manage the personnel. Tryon suggested that the

¹⁶ Vice Admiral Sir George Tryon (1832-1893). C-in-C Australia Station 1885-87, C-in-C Mediterranean Squadron 1892-93. Drowned after collision between HM battleships *Victoria* and *Camperdown*.

¹⁷ Tryon, 'With Reference to Colonial Vessels of War'. 28 November 1884, PRO: ADM 116/68, f.131.

¹⁸ Memo by Alex Stuart (Premier of NSW), 3 June 1885, citing Tryon. PRO: ADM 116/68, f.455.

¹⁹ 'Preparations made by the Admiralty in Anticipation of an Outbreak of War in the Spring of 1885', in 'General Outline of Possible Naval Operations Against Russia, 1885', PRO: ADM 1/8869, p. 17.

financial responsibility for the cruisers should be split: in peace all costs would be met by the colonies and in war the British Government would assume the burden. Finally, and most importantly, Tryon advised that the colonial cruisers be placed under the operational control of the station Commander-in-Chief, but they would never leave Australian waters without the permission of the Governor-General.²⁰ In September 1885, the Admiralty endorsed Tryon's scheme and authorised him to negotiate a settlement with the local authorities. Significantly, the Board agreed at the same time to leave responsibility for the existing local defence forces to the individual colonies [document 9].²¹ Tryon spent the next few months fleshing out his proposals. On 24 December 1885 he circulated a paper among colonial leaders outlining a definite scheme that called for the building of an 'auxiliary squadron' comprised of five third-class cruisers and two gunboats.²²

Tryon's scheme did not find favour with the more parsimonious Australian colonists. Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania were willing to agree that the colonies should fund the maintenance costs of the projected vessels, pay their crews, and make an annual contribution to the Imperial Government towards their first cost. South Australia and West Australia also favoured this view—more or less—but Victoria was prepared to assume only the burden of maintaining the ships.²³ Tryon believed that the Victorian Premier's intransigence was due to his discovery that the Admiralty was prepared to finance the full cost of building the cruisers. On 24 April 1886, in an effort to break the deadlock, Tryon invited all the colonial premiers to an informal meeting on board his flagship and three accepted. It is interesting to note that once again the admiral took the opportunity to lecture his audience on the relative fighting value of cruisers manned by reservists and by professionals. From his remarks it can be inferred Tryon feared that not all present at the meeting were happy with having British seamen manning Australian ships.²⁴

Despite Tryon's tact and perseverance, negotiations with the colonial leaders in the end proved futile and were not revived before Tryon was succeeded as Commander-in-Chief in February 1887. His efforts were not entirely wasted, however. Later that year the leaders of the Australian colonies again examined the question of naval defences at the Imperial Conference in London. This time discussions were held with senior representatives of the British Government. Tryon's proposals were resurrected to serve as the point of departure for the ensuing discussions. At the end of the conference the Australian representatives finally agreed to adopt the Tryon scheme—albeit with some important modifications [document 10]. Accordingly, five cruisers and two gunboats were ordered and the Australians

²⁰ Tryon to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies, 24 December 1885, PRO: ADM 116/69, f.289.

²¹ Admiralty, 'Local Defence and Protection of Floating Trade in the Waters of the Australasian Colonies', 9 September 1885, PRO: ADM 116/68, f.438.

²² Circular letter from Tryon, 24 December 1885, PRO: ADM 116/69, f.10.

²³ Tryon to Admiralty enclosing 'Result of Meeting of Premiers on Board HMS *Nelson* at Sydney, 26–27 April 1886', 3 May 1886, PRO: ADM 116/69, f.324; see also Tryon to Admiralty, 11 June 1885, 'Remarks as to Paper by Sir. A. Stuart on Colonial Naval Matters', PRO: ADM 116/68, f.298.

²⁴ Tryon, 'Memorandum on Colonial Naval Defence', 24 April 1886, PRO: ADM 116/69, f.345.

promised to pay £106,000 a year for ten years towards their first cost, manning and maintenance; New Zealand agreed to contribute a further £20,000 per annum. Excluded from the 1887 Naval Agreement, however, were any provisions (as originally suggested by Tryon) for allowing the cruisers to be used to help train the colonial militias. Also deleted was the clause promising that after ten years the ships would become the property of the colonies. This was more understandable. Contrary to the views of many contemporary Australian statesmen and some historians, the colonies did not bear anything like the full cost of maintaining the Auxiliary Squadron. The Australasian contribution towards the estimated £700,000 warship building costs, for instance, was limited to just £35,000 a year for ten years.

Rather than help to strengthen the ties between the colonies and the Mother Country, the 1887 Australian Naval Agreement achieved exactly the opposite. The Admiralty became disillusioned even before the ships entered service. British naval leaders believed they had acted generously towards the colonists in 1887. Since then, they had upgraded the warships to be sent to Australia without asking the colonies to bear any share of the additional costs; and they had broken up the training squadron 'to find officers and men for the Australian squadron provided under the Imperial Defence Act'. Yet it seemed that the Board of Admiralty's efforts had been neither appreciated nor acknowledged in Australia. As the warships of the Auxiliary Squadron neared completion, moreover, the Admiralty became flooded with demands from Australia for favours and concessions. Australian politicians of every colour petitioned for the squadron to visit their cities and there were widespread calls for Australians to serve on board 'our ships'—as the cruisers were increasingly becoming regarded. 'It is sentiment alone which prompts this suggestion', remarked First Lord of the Admiralty Lord George Hamilton,²⁵ 'and therefore we must be careful not to seem to unduly check it [but] I am sure that in practice we shall under no circumstances obtain many Australian born men'.²⁶ The most persistent and irritating demand was for the Auxiliary Squadron, immediately upon reaching Australia, to enter Sydney in review order and then proceed to visit each state capital in turn. Australian statesmen remained deaf to explanations that after steaming 12,000 miles the ships would not be in a fit state and thus would not create a good impression. On 18 June 1891, the Senior Naval Lord's patience finally snapped:

It is to be hoped that the Australian's demands will have some finality. It appears the Admiralty after all the trouble have not satisfied the colonies and they are not satisfied themselves—with the arrangements—no one is pleased.²⁷

The good will between the Admiralty and the self-governing colonies was further undermined by the latter's refusal, after the Auxiliary Squadron took station, to pay for the modernisation of their harbour defence craft. During the 1887 conference, there had been much talk about the 'auxiliary squadron' being the

²⁵ Lord George Francis Hamilton (1845–1927), First Lord of the Admiralty 1885–86.

²⁶ Minute (1 September 1891) by Lord George Hamilton, CO 12 August 1891, 'Entry of Boys into RN of Australian, New Zealand and Tasmanian Birth; Entry of Stokers'. PRO: ADM 1/7077.

²⁷ Minute (6 July 1891) by Richard Vessey Hamilton, CO 18 June 1891, 'HM Ships for Service in Australian Waters'. PRO: ADM 1/7077.

stepping-stone towards the establishment of an 'Australian navy'. Many in Britain and Australia had expected that during the ten year term of the agreement the various States would be taking steps to augment their local forces, and that by the expiration of the 1887 naval agreement the colonies would be in a position to establish their own navy. But in 1892 depression and financial crisis hit the colonies forcing them to cut back defence expenditure by over fifty per cent. Nearly all warships were laid up in ordinary (without crews) and left to rust. Pressure from interest groups, however, induced the politicians to retain most of the personnel and form them into naval brigades and to become—as described by one contemporary observer—little better than 'inferior infantry'. Predictably, the officers of the naval brigades demanded billets on board the cruisers of the 'Auxiliary Squadron' and assistance with providing their men with sea training. In addition, pressure was exerted on the Admiralty to find employment in the Royal Navy for the naval militia. Such demands were always refused; the Commander-in-Chief was authorised to do no more than accept ten seamen and ten stokers each year on secondment from the militia. By 1897, the state of relations between the Admiralty and the Australian colonies was poor and the agreement on the verge of collapse. At the 1897 Colonial Conference, the colonists agreed to continue with the naval agreement only after the First Lord of the Admiralty promised to make no further cuts in the strength of the imperial Australian Squadron.²⁸ The Royal Navy, in other words, was obliged to retain in Australian waters not only the seven ships of the Auxiliary Squadron but also the six vessels of the Imperial Squadron.

The Commonwealth

At the time of Australian federation there was singular lack of public and parliamentary enthusiasm for defence issues.²⁹ Under the Act of Commonwealth, passed in March 1901, the new federal government assumed full control and financial responsibility for all existing naval and military units. The Commonwealth accordingly inherited from the States a total of 242 permanent and 1,637 part-time naval personnel, four worn out gun-boats and four ancient torpedo craft, none of which had any military value, and a liability of £75–80,000 a year.³⁰ On taking office Australia's first government had no ideas of what to do with this force. Certainly there were no plans to create an 'Australian Navy'. Although Sir Edmund Barton,³¹ the Prime Minister, and Sir John Forrest,³² the Minister for Defence, both expressed a desire in Parliament to see Australia's defences improved, this translated into a belief that amalgamation of existing military forces would result in improved efficiency and

²⁸ Minute (undated but c. April 1902) by Custance. 'Australian Commonwealth', PRO: ADM 1/7514. f.219.

²⁹ R. Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth. Australian Federation: Expectations and Fulfilment, 1889-1910*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975), chapter 3.

³⁰ Forrest to Barton, 15 March 1902, f.253. 'Naval Defence: Minute by Sir John Forrest', Minutes of Proceedings and Papers Laid Before the Conference between Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self Governing Colonies, 1902. Miscellaneous No. 144, Appendix 5. Admiralty Library, London.

³¹ Sir Edmund Barton (1849–1920), first Australian Prime Minister 1901–03.

³² Sir John Forrest (1847–1910), Minister for Defence 1901–03.

lower overhead costs. In short, their aim was to meet demands for a cut in expenditure on defence.³³ The importance of quickly achieving this goal was underlined after Forrest's defence estimates were rejected by the federal parliament for failing to provide a large enough reduction.

Even if the Barton Government had wanted to establish a proper Australian Navy the role of such a force would have remained limited. Although Australia was technically a 'self-governing dominion', the Commonwealth was still not a sovereign state and thus under international law (and in the eyes of foreign powers) her warships were not recognised as distinctly 'Australian'. The crown, i.e. the British Government, was still responsible for actions committed by dominion owned warships operating outside the three-mile limit of Australian territorial waters. The British Government's continued liability for colonial warships made her statesmen nervous at allowing Australia to operate warships on the high seas for fear that they might somehow embroil Britain and the Empire in a war with a rival power. Commonwealth warships were prohibited, therefore, from operating outside territorial waters unless placed under the orders and thus control of the officer commanding the Royal Navy's Australian Squadron. Not until 1910, after the Commonwealth adopted the British Naval Discipline Act and the relative status of Australian and British seamen and warships had been clearly defined, were constraints on the movements of Australian warships finally eased. But still they could not pass beyond the limits of the Australia Station (which the British Government shrank considerably) unless under the orders of a British admiral. [see Appendix 1.]

In 1901, Sir John Forrest's first attempt to find a 'naval policy' was to write to the new Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy's Australia Squadron, Rear Admiral Lewis Beaumont.³⁴ Forrest wanted answers to two questions: first, could the warships given by the states to the Commonwealth be amalgamated into a squadron that could serve as the nucleus of an Australian navy; and second, could they be made reasonably efficient with a moderate increase in expenditure? The short answer to both was no. Beaumont condemned the warships as 'worn out and out of date'. He regarded the vessels of the Auxiliary Squadron as equally obsolete and in need of replacement. Yet despite the transparent need for modern units in Australian waters, Beaumont advised against the formation of an Australian navy. Given that the principal threat to Australian interests remained the interdiction of oceanic trade, he reasoned, a Commonwealth navy would obviously require to be built upon a force of modern trade protection craft. But, he pointed out, the latest generation of ocean-going cruisers cost half a million pounds apiece and upwards. The Commonwealth could not afford to own more than one or two such vessels, let alone a squadron. Then there was the high cost of maintaining such craft, largely the result of having to provide permanent crews. The cost of keeping a single first class armoured-cruiser in commission was more than the sum expended on naval defence the previous year by all the States combined. Beaumont concluded,

³³ *The Emergent Commonwealths*, pp. 119-23

³⁴ Admiral Lewis Anthony Beaumont (1847-1922), C-in-C Australia 1901-03, retired list 1912.

... it will be seen from the size and number of ships required, from the necessity which will undoubtedly arise of replacing them from time to time by more modern ships, from the fact that they must be continuously manned by trained officers and men, and that the ships must not only be maintained in commission but be gradually provided with new bases that it is beyond the power of the Commonwealth at the outset to create such a force. It follows, therefore, that such a force can only be acquired and maintained by arrangement with the imperial government. . . .³⁵

Rear Admiral Beaumont recommended the only way forward would be to merge and re-equip the Royal Navy's imperial and Australia's auxiliary cruiser squadrons. He guessed that Australia could reasonably offer to finance the building and running of three second-class cruisers, which would cost just under £265,000 per annum. He further advised that unless the Commonwealth had money to spare the naval brigades should be sharply reduced or even disbanded. 'They cannot form the crews of modern ships which in war they would have to man and therefore to use them would mean to create an Australian Navy practically for which the country is not yet ready [to afford]'.³⁶

Sir John Forrest turned next to Captain William Creswell,³⁷ then serving as the naval commandant of the Queensland Marine Defence Force, and regarded by many as the leading Australian expert on naval matters. While Creswell agreed that Australia could not yet afford its own navy, he nevertheless argued that for a moderate price the foundations could be laid [document 12]. Creswell pleaded that with a budget of £350,000 a year and one modern ship he could begin training the naval militia into efficient crews. Additional small (third-class) cruisers could then be purchased as and when the Commonwealth could afford them. Within ten years, he claimed, Australia would have her own navy. Beaumont dismissed Creswell's scheme as unworkable [document 13]. Not only had Creswell understated the costs involved, the Commander-in-Chief explained to the defence minister, but his paper revealed that he clearly lacked a proper understanding of the conditions of modern warfare. The small (and cheap) third-class cruisers he proposed to build would stand no chance against the armoured-cruisers likely to be employed in Australian waters by Britain's most likely potential enemies, France or Russia. They would be too small to fight and too slow to run away.³⁸ And besides, Beaumont added, what would Australia do if war broke out within ten years and thus before the new navy was ready?

During the summer of 1901, Forrest attempted to widen the debate by publishing the naval advice he had so far received.³⁹ So far none of the proposals he

³⁵ Beaumont to Governor-General Lord Hopetoun, 16 July 1901. 'Australian Commonwealth', PRO: ADM 17514, f248.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell (1852–1933), first Naval Officer Commanding Commonwealth Naval Forces 1904, First Naval Member Australian Naval Board 1911–19.

³⁸ For an explanation of armoured cruiser policy see: N. Lamberti, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), chapter 1; and J. Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), chapter 2.

³⁹ Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers on Defence, 1901–02, vol. 2, No. 27, No. 52.

had received appeared even remotely palatable. Notwithstanding the financial impossibility of creating an Australian navy, there remained the question of what to do with the naval brigades. The defence minister faced a dilemma: on the one hand he accepted the logic of Beaumont's arguments that the naval militia were incapable of crewing modern warships [document 14].⁴⁰ On the other, he was convinced that 'any scheme of Naval Defence which does not provide for the utilisation of local naval brigades formed at the various ports of the Commonwealth, with the express object of gradually building up an Australian Navy, will not meet with public approval'.⁴¹ Forrest hoped, somewhat unrealistically, that an escape would be found by the Admiralty lending old cruisers suitable for use as training ships for the militia.⁴² On 14 November 1901, Beaumont confirmed in a letter to the Admiralty that since federation there had grown among Australians a widespread feeling of grievance against the Royal Navy for refusing to assist in training the naval brigades [document 11].

In March 1902, Prime Minister Barton and Sir John Forrest left Melbourne for England to attend the Imperial Conference without a settled naval policy. Barton and Forrest were greeted in London by a Board of Admiralty, headed by the Earl of Selborne,⁴³ prepared to renew the naval agreement with Australia, but at the same time determined to regain full control over the movement and dispositions of all British warships and seamen. In the opinion of the Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), Rear Admiral Reginald Custance,⁴⁴ this could be achieved by persuading the colonists that tying warships to the defence of specific regions made no strategic sense. In a first draft of the Admiralty memorandum prepared for the conference entitled 'The Australian Naval Question, 1902', Custance insisted, and Lord Selborne approved, that the word 'defence' must not be used during the conference [document 16]. Instead, the audience would be asked to focus on threats to Australian interests and how the Royal Navy would respond. Custance reasoned that when Barton and Forrest realised only large and medium-sized modern cruisers were capable of engaging enemy corsairs, they would accept that the only feasible course of action would be to increase their government's subvention to the Royal Navy. Custance recommended the Admiralty ask the Australians to give the fantastic sum of £467,000.⁴⁵ Although Lord Walter Kerr, the Senior Naval Lord, thought this figure too high, he approved of Custance's reasoning and endorsed his line of argument [document 17].

The Admiralty position paper actually circulated at the 1902 conference was entitled 'Memorandum on Sea-Power and the Principles involved in it' [document 18].⁴⁶ This paper has been often quoted but rarely understood. It is often forgotten, moreover, that it was written for publication throughout the Empire and never

⁴⁰ Forrest to Barton, 15 March 1902, (see note 30 above).

⁴¹ Forrest to Barton, 5 October 1901, 'Australian Commonwealth', PRO: ADM 1/7514, f.272.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ William Palmer, 2nd Earl of Selborne (1859–1942), First Lord of the Admiralty 1900–05.

⁴⁴ Admiral Sir Reginald Neville Custance (1847–1935), DNI 1899–1902, retired list 1912.

⁴⁵ Custance, 'Detailed Proposals Relative to Australia and New Zealand', June 1902. PRO: ADM 1/7610, f. 485.

⁴⁶ Minute by Selborne to DNI, 10 June 1902, PRO: ADM 1/7610, f. 476.

intended as a statement of Admiralty strategic thinking. Although incorporating many of the arguments and statistics used by Custance in 'The Australian Question', the emphasis was quite different. In the first part of the document, great stress was laid on the importance of battles and battleships. The aim here was not, as some historians have asserted, to preach the dogma of concentration of force but to meet criticism from the colonies at the Admiralty's refusal to strengthen the station fleets across the globe with battleships. The Admiralty explained that so long as the Royal Navy retained command of the sea through possessing the most powerful battle fleet in the world, no rival power would ever dare to dispatch an invasion convoy over the sea. A concentrated battle-fleet, in other words, maintained by the British taxpayer, was the ultimate force for deterrence and the guarantee against oversea invasion of any imperial territory by a hostile power.

Battleships however, the memorandum continued, were of little use in protecting trade; that was the function of cruisers. The Admiralty put forward the argument that the security of the global trading system was vital to the prosperity of every nation in the British Empire, and therefore each colony should contribute towards the maintenance of the squadrons of trade protection cruisers scattered across the globe. The Admiralty further pointed out that one-third of imperial trade was conducted between the colonies and thus did not benefit the Mother Country. In the Pacific, over fifty per cent of trade was exclusively colonial yet almost the entire burden of protection was carried by British taxpayers. Despite the poor writing style and the confused arguments contained in the paper, the central message was clear enough: the ships of the Royal Navy's trade protection squadrons were mostly out-of-date and the colonies ought to contribute a share towards the cost of their replacement.

At the opening of the conference, Lord Selborne called upon Australia to donate £336,000 a year towards the cost of establishing a new Australia Squadron comprised of eleven modern warships including a powerful first-class armoured cruiser. To sweeten the pill, and assist Barton and Forrest meet demands for the employment of the naval militias, he offered to establish a branch of the RNR in Australia and provide two (later increased to three) training cruisers. Selborne further promised to fill the complements for two of the cruisers in full commission with Australian seamen. These men would be specially entered into the Royal Navy for the shortened term of five years and paid at 'colonial' rates—more than double the regular scale. The magnitude of these concessions can scarcely be overstated. All Selborne asked from the Australians in return was to allow the cruisers normally based at Sydney to patrol the waters of the China Station and the East Indies whenever necessary. Barton, however, replied that the Commonwealth could not afford so much as £300,000 and furthermore that Australian personnel could not and would not be made to serve overseas. The Australian Premier explained that in order to sell the idea of federation to the electorate, it had been necessary to accept a number of constraints on the federal exchequer. The most onerous of these was Sir Edward Braddon's clause,⁴⁷ which compelled the Commonwealth to surrender to the

⁴⁷ Sir Edward Nicholas Braddon (1829–1904), Tasmanian Premier 1894–99.

States eighty per cent of all revenues from customs and excise duties for a period of ten years.

Ultimately, an agreement was reached whereby Australia would pay £200,000 a year towards the cost of running the Australia Squadron—or roughly five twelfths the estimated cost—and kept all the concessions originally offered by the Admiralty. From the British perspective the Australians had negotiated themselves a bargain, but Forrest and Barton were not so sure and feared their electorate would not accept the terms of the new agreement. Telegrams from the Cabinet in Melbourne confirmed the Australian Parliament was most unhappy at funding an increased subsidy—unless an equivalent sum was deducted from army expenditure. Still louder objections were voiced at news that the Federal Government would be surrendering the right to veto the departure of British ships from Australian waters in time of war.⁴⁸ After the conference ended, Forrest tried unsuccessfully to re-open negotiations with the Admiralty over this latter question. Selborne replied that the Admiralty would not grant any more concessions. Australia thus had three options: either pay the cost of an entire squadron; accept the settlement already agreed, or be prepared to see their navy divorced from the imperial fleet. To many historians the terms of the 1902 Naval Agreement appeared harsh and unreasonable; but it should not be forgotten that the Commonwealth contributed less than half the running costs of the Australia Squadron. Expecting the Admiralty to relinquish control over ships manned and paid for mostly from British resources seems even more unreasonable. Barton and Forrest returned home to find, as they had feared, that public opinion was not impressed with their efforts. The new Naval Agreement was ratified only after Barton promised to retain the naval brigades, and made the passing of his bill an issue of confidence in his government.

Rear Admiral Beaumont, the Commander-in-Chief in Australia, and his successor Rear Admiral Arthur Fanshawe,⁴⁹ were equally unimpressed. They predicted difficulties in persuading the men presently belonging to the naval militia transferring to the RNR (as the Admiralty had hoped would happen).⁵⁰ They also foresaw trouble with veteran British seamen working alongside less-experienced Australian recruits receiving more than twice their pay. If this was not enough, Australian personnel demanded and were given far more leave than their British counterparts.⁵¹ In time these fears were shown to be amply justified. Both Commanders-in-Chief also resented interference from Australian statesmen who believed that because the Commonwealth contributed to the cost of the Squadron, that they should be allowed the right of inspection.⁵² The admirals were equally uncomfortable with the degree of publicity the local press gave to the Squadron. Critics of the Naval Agreement were quick to publish every mishap and accident. It was hardly surprising, therefore, when in 1903 the Australian Government asked the Admiralty to substitute one old training cruiser for six brand-new destroyers that could be given to the naval brigades, the harassed Admiral Fanshawe urged the

⁴⁸ *The Emergent Commonwealth*, p.134–5.

⁴⁹ Admiral Sir Arthur Fanshawe, C-in-C Australia Station 1902–05.

⁵⁰ Beaumont to Selborne, 29 September 1902, PRO: ADM 1/7610, f.440.

⁵¹ Fanshawe to Admiralty, 27 April 1903, PRO: ADM 1/7671, f.117.

⁵² Fanshawe to Selborne, 4 May 1903, *ibid.*, f.149.

Admiralty to accept. He slyly suggested that in return the Admiralty might delete the clauses in the Agreement committing the Royal Navy to training Australian personnel in the ships of the Australia Squadron. Fanshawe over stepped the mark, however, when he 'over zealously' began encouraging the Australian Government to push for the destroyers. For this the Admiralty censured him. And the destroyers were rightly refused.

At this point it is profitable to suspend the narrative of events in order to consider the meaning of the word 'destroyer' during this period. Between 1903 and 1909, as we shall see, Captain Creswell and other officers belonging to the naval militia, proposed on a number of occasions the creation of an Australian navy built around a force of destroyers and manned by the naval brigades. When considering these various schemes, readers should be careful to remember that the 200-ton warships first classed as destroyers in 1893 were very different craft from those built only a few years later. The author of a proposal made in 1903 that Australia build a flotilla of destroyers had a very different role for the craft in mind, than another author of a similar plan drafted ten years later. Destroyers—or Torpedo-boat-destroyers—as their full name suggests, were originally designed to catch and destroy small torpedo boats. They were frail unseaworthy craft and their engines were usually highly unreliable. Considering their range was no more than a few hundred miles, it is understandable that Admiralty officers enquired: where would the hostile torpedo boats be coming from when the nearest foreign naval base was 4,000 miles away? Displacing about five hundred tons in 1903, they were never intended for patrol duties or to accompany a fleet and indeed were incapable of such missions. Over the next ten years the standard displacement of 'destroyers' doubled and naval experts increasingly saw them being used in more ambitious roles, such as components of the grand-fleet of battle. During this period the Royal Navy also began developing a 2,000-ton warship saddled with the nomenclature of 'ocean-destroyers'. The prototype vessel, HMS *Swift*, was laid down in 1906, but unexpected technical and engineering problems delayed the adoption of this type in large numbers for many years.⁵³ From 1912, these craft were re-classified as 'light cruisers'—a term that had not been used before.

The Fleet Unit

By 1905, Australian dissatisfaction with the Naval Agreement had become so acute that on 28 August, Alfred Deakin,⁵⁴ the new Commonwealth Prime Minister, formally requested that it be cancelled [document 26]. He suggested that instead of continuing to pay 'tribute', which offended the national sense of self-respect, Commonwealth funds for naval defence might more popularly be spent on subsidies for the building of commercial liners that could in peace improve communications with the Mother Country and in war be employed as auxiliary cruisers. The following week, the defence minister asked Captain Creswell, now the senior officer of the

⁵³ For a more detailed explanation of RN destroyer policy see: Lambert, *Fisher's Naval Revolution*.

⁵⁴ Alfred Deakin (1856–1919), Prime Minister of Australia 1903–04, 1905–08, 1909–10.

Commonwealth Naval Force, for his views. By this time Creswell had given up his small cruisers scheme; he now wanted thirty-four (500-ton) coastal destroyers and torpedo-boats for reconnaissance duties and home defence [document 27]. Whatever the merits or otherwise of Creswell's proposals, his proposition was too expensive and thus did not appeal to Deakin. In November, the Prime Minister wrote again to London for advice, this time asking for a comprehensive report from the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) on defences protecting Australian ports. After the request was approved on 24 November, he sent Creswell to England for consultation. Creswell, unfortunately, made the mistake of first approaching Admiral Lord Charles Beresford,⁵⁵ a vocal and dangerous opponent of Admiralty policy; he compounded this error by next talking to other disgruntled naval officers of the administration. The Admiralty, not surprisingly, objected to Creswell's prior discussions with members of the so-called 'Syndicate of Discontent' and accordingly gave him a very cool reception.⁵⁶

The CID report, despatched to Australia in July 1906, was highly complimentary of the Australian Army but the sections referring to the Commonwealth Naval Force were less flattering. In short, the CID advised that the coastal batteries protecting the main Australian ports were more than strong enough to ward off hostile cruisers and that harbour defence craft were now superfluous. The most damning statement was that short-range destroyers would be of no use in the defence of Australian interests—but if they were ever required then the Royal Navy would provide them. Given that the Commonwealth still could not afford ocean-going cruisers, therefore, the CID concluded, the only useful outlet for Australian maritime ambition was the local branch of the RNR established under the 1902 Naval Agreement.

The Admiralty's position on the subject, written by DNI Captain Charles Ottley,⁵⁷ had been much less strident in tone [document 28]. In May 1906, Ottley had advised the Board that in principle he did not object to seeing the creation of an Australian navy. What the DNI objected to was the proposal advanced by Captain Creswell to scatter 'coastal destroyers' along the Australian littoral. Such a force, he argued, would contribute little to the naval defence of the empire, and indeed would prove more a source of weakness than strength. Minutes show that Sir John Fisher, the First Sea Lord,⁵⁸ and Lord Tweedmouth, the First Lord,⁵⁹ broadly shared Ottley's views [document 31]. On 26 May, the First Lord informed the CID that the Admiralty would not oppose the establishment of an Australian navy built upon a flotilla of new-model 'ocean destroyers'.⁶⁰ When the CID met to consider what advice to give

⁵⁵ Admiral Lord Charles Beresford (1846–1919), Admiral Commanding Channel Squadron 1903–05, C-in-C Afloat (Channel Fleet) 1907–09, retired list 1911.

⁵⁶ For a survey of the politics of intra-service rivalry at this time see: Lambert, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Rear Admiral Sir Charles Langdale Ottley (1858–1932), DNI 1905–07, Secretary CID 1907–11, from 1912 Director of Armstrong-Elswick Ltd.

⁵⁸ Admiral of the Fleet John Arbuthnot Fisher 1st Baron of Kilverstone (1841–1920), C-in-C Mediterranean 1899–1902, Second Sea Lord 1902–03, First Sea Lord 1904–10, 1914–15, Created Baron Fisher 25 January 1910.

⁵⁹ Edward Marjoribanks Tweedmouth, (1849–1909), First Lord of the Admiralty 1905–08.

⁶⁰ 88th Meeting of the CID, 25 May 1906, PRO: CAB 38/11/23, p.1: Ottley to Colonial Office, 30 July 1906, 'Colonial and Imperial Conference', PRO: CAB 17/77, f. 65.

Australia, however, the representatives of the less enlightened departments of government, notably the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, objected to the Commonwealth being encouraged to develop its own navy.

When the CID's reply was published in Australia it provoked a popular outcry. It was not so much the content as the 'very superior style' of the document that offended. Australian concerns at the continued expansion of the Japanese Empire had been dismissed as unfounded.⁶¹ The lack of courtesy in the CID document was not quickly forgotten. 'Nothing annoyed them [Australians] so much in the last imperial conference memorandum as the sentence telling them that destroyers were not wanted and if they were it would be the duty of the Admiralty to provide them for their defence', Vice Admiral Sir Wilmot Fawkes⁶² explained to the First Lord of the Admiralty a full two years later. 'It made them feel like "naughty children".'⁶³ Meanwhile, Captain Creswell made every effort to exploit the public's indignation. In September 1906, he revised his torpedo fleet scheme and resubmitted it to Parliament [document 33]. On 26 September Deakin approved the plan in principle—but refused to act until given a mandate at the general election next year. Although Deakin did not feel qualified to oppose the force structure put forward by Creswell, memories of the inefficiencies he had witnessed twenty years earlier in the old Victorian naval defence force, convinced him that any Australian navy must be linked closely with the Royal Navy. Deakin hoped to obtain the Board of Admiralty endorsement of this principle at the next Colonial Conference scheduled for April 1907.

During the winter of 1906–07, the Admiralty thoroughly reviewed the Australian question and concluded that the cancellation of the 1902 Naval Agreement would be greatly to the Royal Navy's advantage [document 34]. The cost of maintaining the Australia Squadron was substantially more than had been estimated—almost double—yet the Commonwealth subsidy remained fixed at £200,000. The Board was not only convinced they would gain financially by abrogation, but there was clear evidence that the arrangements made to incorporate Australian nationals into the Royal Navy's Australia Squadron were just not working. Less than three-quarters of the billets reserved for Australians had thus far been filled. Differences in pay, impatience by Australian seamen for promotion, and the pernicious influence of the Commonwealth Naval Force, furthermore, were undermining the popularity of the Royal Navy in Australia. In February 1907, the Admiralty resolved actively to encourage Australia to build its own Navy by promising to give instructors and technical assistance [document 35]. This change in heart was first admitted publicly by Lord Tweedmouth on the eve of the Colonial Conference at the end of April [document 36]. Henceforth, all self-governing dominions were actively encouraged to build local defence flotillas of torpedo-craft and especially submarines.

⁶¹ For the growing perception of the Japanese threat see: Meaney, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–16, 130–3, 156–70.

⁶² Admiral Sir Wilmot Hawksworth Fawkes (1846–1926), C-in-C Australia Station 1905–08, retired list 1911.

⁶³ Fawkes to McKenna, 18 September 1908, McKenna Ms., 3/8, f. 18, Churchill College Cambridge.

The record of subsequent discussions between the Admiralty and Alfred Deakin, however, indicate that the Australian Prime Minister was not at all happy with the thought of complete independence [document 37]. He wanted to see Australian naval personnel not only trained by the Royal Navy, but also to possess the full status of RN regulars: British and Australian personnel to be, in effect, interchangeable. Deakin tentatively suggested that Commonwealth personnel, after basic training in the imperial squadron, might serve a term in the Australian local flotilla before returning to 'general service' in the Royal Navy's Australia Squadron.⁶⁴ The Admiralty's objection to this seemingly reasonable arrangement was that it called for the surrender of control over any British personnel serving in the Australian flotilla. In addition, because Deakin refused to consider Australian seamen serving outside national waters, to implement the scheme would compel the Admiralty to retain warships at Sydney for them to rotate into for their general service and for training purposes. In effect, the Admiralty would still face constraints over the movement of its ships, yet receive no subvention for the inconvenience. This was no bargain! Admiral Sir John Fisher agreed with Ottley 'in the absolute impossibility of agreeing to Mr. Deakin's proposals'.⁶⁵ The Australians must accept full independence.

In August, Deakin privately sent Sir John Fisher a revised outline of his ideas [document 38]. The following month he wrote officially to the Admiralty with a proposal to build a local defence flotilla and raise 1,000 full-time personnel. Much to the Admiralty's annoyance, Deakin also continued to insist that in return the Australian naval personnel must be granted the status of belonging to the Royal Navy in every respect except as regards pay. But it was Deakin's request for the loan or gift of four 'P' class cruisers (two of which to be manned by RN personnel) to serve as drill ships that really annoyed the Admiralty. 'It seems as if Mr. Deakin wants to get all that he now has without paying the Imperial Government anything for it, and with the right of control thrown in', laconically observed the new DNI, Captain Edmond Slade [document 40].⁶⁶ Sir John Fisher was even more angry: 'The Colonies one and all grab all they possibly can out of us and give us nothing back', he wrote to the First Lord: 'They are all alike!' Nevertheless, the Admiralty did not immediately refuse. Instead, Deakin was asked to flesh out the 'meagre details' in his proposals.⁶⁷

For the next seven months Deakin repeatedly asked the Admiralty to endorse his ideas, at least in principle, but they consistently refused to do so without first seeing more details.⁶⁸ The Admiralty, in other words, wanted to know exactly what it was they were being asked to approve! Even after Deakin dropped his request for the

⁶⁴ Ottley, 'Memorandum of interview between Mr. Deakin (Premier of the Australian Commonwealth) and the Naval Intelligence Department', 24 April 1907, PRO: ADM 1/7949.

⁶⁵ Minute by Fisher, 29 April 1907, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Admiral Sir Edmond John Slade (1859–1928), DNI 1907–09, C-in-C East Indies 1909–11, retired list 1917.

⁶⁷ Greene, 'M Branch remarks – Australian Naval Agreement', 30 August 1907, and Fisher's minute thereon, PRO: ADM 1/7949.

⁶⁸ Deakin to Admiralty via Colonial Office, 16 October 1907, and minutes (21 November 1907) by Greene, *ibid.*; see also copy of telegram (7 December 1907) from Colonial Office to Governor-General, printed document No.4, *ibid.*

four cruisers the Admiralty remained unmoved.⁶⁹ The stand-off continued until April 1908, when Vice Admiral Wilmot Fawkes, the new Commander-in-Chief explained to the Admiralty Secretary that neither Deakin nor his naval advisers (Creswell) possessed the technical knowledge or understanding to draw up the more detailed proposals [document 42]. The only solution was for the Admiralty itself to write the proposal they were prepared to endorse. During the spring and summer of 1908, the DNI, Edmond Slade, went to a great deal of trouble to work out the requirements and cost of creating an Australian navy [document 43]. Acquiring the warships, as Slade noted, was a simple matter. The difficulty was organising the personnel: it was simply not possible to establish navies comprised of only 1,000 men and at the same time formulate a career structure sufficiently attractive to entice men of talent to join the service. From the Royal Navy's own experience, it had been found that unless men were offered a life-career with reasonable prospects of promotion, they would quit or simply not join. In the end, Slade resolved that the only practicable solution was to do as Deakin had suggested—and allow full interchange between the British and Australian naval services. In the face of strong objections from the civil servants in the Admiralty's personnel (N) branch (who would have the headache of having to administer the exchanges) Slade obtained the Board's grudging approval for his plan. On 20 August it was forwarded to Australia for approval [document 45]. But no reply was ever received.

The reason for the silence from Melbourne was a change in government. In July, the leader of the Labor Party, Andrew Fisher,⁷⁰ had replaced Alfred Deakin as Commonwealth Premier. Andrew Fisher was not so experienced as Deakin in defence matters, and did not share the latter's concerns at the importance of taking precautions to ensure the efficiency of local naval personnel. The new Prime Minister convinced himself, perhaps with some assistance from Captain Creswell, that the militia of the existing Commonwealth Naval Force was fully capable of operating destroyers without any help from the Royal Navy. He also noted Creswell's opposition to submarines. Acting upon these convictions, in February 1909, Andrew Fisher placed orders in Britain for three 700-ton destroyers (later commissioned as HMAS *Parramatta*, HMAS *Yarra* and HMAS *Warrego*) without first consulting the Admiralty or Vice Admiral Richard Poore,⁷¹ the new Commander-in-Chief, Australia.⁷² In April, Andrew Fisher at last informed London that the Commonwealth envisaged building over the next three years some twenty-three destroyers. Though a covering letter from the Governor-General warned that 'owing to the unsettled condition of politics here no great reliance should be placed upon these proposals as a final expression of Australian opinion',⁷³

⁶⁹ Telegram (17 December 1907) from Governor-General Lord Northcote to Admiralty via Colonial Office. *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Andrew Fisher (1862–1928), Australian Prime Minister 1908–09, 1910–13, 1915.

⁷¹ Admiral Sir Richard Poore (1858–1930), C-in-C Australia Station 1908–11, retired list 1917.

⁷² Poore to McKenna, 2 May 1909, McKenna Ms., 3/9, f.28.

⁷³ Telegram (19 April 1909) Governor (Lord Dudley) to Colonial Secretary (Lord Crewe). PRO: ADM 116/1100B, f. 32.

During the spring and early summer of 1909, naval affairs became a political issue of great importance in both Britain and Australia. On 16 March, the British Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith,⁷⁴ and the First Lord of the Admiralty, Reginald McKenna,⁷⁵ announced to Parliament the Government's intention to lay down immediately four new dreadnoughts and possibly four more later in the year. The justification for this huge program, they explained to a hostile House of Commons, was the now visible challenge to Britain's continued naval supremacy posed by the steady expansion of the German High Sea Fleet. On 22 March, the New Zealand Government telegraphed an offer to pay for one and if necessary two more battleships for the Royal Navy. In the following weeks, the governments of Australia, Canada, and South Africa telegraphed further offers of support. At the end of April the Admiralty invited the Premiers of the self-governing dominions to discuss the naval situation in London at a special naval conference.

In Australia, meanwhile, Premier Andrew Fisher's unwillingness to do anything more tangible for the mother-country, such as match the New Zealand offer, angered many. The State governments of Victoria and New South Wales protested that if the Commonwealth Government would not make such an offer then they would. In the Federal Parliament, members of the opposition national Liberal Party urged a sceptical Alfred Deakin to use the issue to attack the Labor ministry. To what extent the naval issue contributed to Deakin's return to power on 2 June is open to debate. Nevertheless, Deakin felt obliged two days later to offer Great Britain a dreadnought, 'or such other addition to its naval strength as might be determined after consultation in London'. Though in the opinion of many historians he did so in the hope that it would not be accepted as already the sense of crisis had begun to subside.

Domestic political considerations prevented Deakin from attending the imperial naval conference in person. Instead he sent Colonel John Foxton,⁷⁶ minister without portfolio, to represent Australia. On arriving in London, Foxton expected no more than to finalise the details of Australia's gift to the Royal Navy. He was thus stunned to be greeted with an Admiralty plan calling for the establishment of a multinational fleet in the Pacific comprised of up-to-date warships, that appeared to be coherent, workable and affordable [documents 47 & 48]. Internal Admiralty documents show that recently the Board had become increasingly disenchanted with the Japanese naval alliance (which was due to expire in 1915) and felt that a powerful fleet based in the Pacific was again necessary to protect British imperial possessions in the region.⁷⁷ The Admiralty's plan called for each dominion to contribute a 'fleet unit'—in effect a 'division' of the new Pacific Fleet—comprised of a battle-cruiser and three light cruisers, plus support craft. The battle-cruiser type was believed to be

⁷⁴ Herbert Henry Asquith, (1852–1928), Prime Minister of Great Britain 1906–16.

⁷⁵ Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna (1863–1943), First Lord of the Admiralty 1908–11.

⁷⁶ Colonel Hon. Justin Fox Foxton (1849–1916), Member for Brisbane 1906–10, Minister without portfolio in Deakin Ministry, Brigadier in command Queensland Field Force (Commonwealth Military Forces), retired 1912.

⁷⁷ N. Lambert, 'Economy or Empire: the fleet unit concept and the quest for collective security in the Pacific, 1909–1914', in K. Neilson and G. Kennedy (eds), *Far Flung Lines: Studies in Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 55–83.

equally capable of performing trade protection missions and engaging enemy battleships.⁷⁸ The personnel required to man the Fleet Unit was estimated at 2,300, which, the Admiralty explained, was the minimum number that could be established as an independent service with prospects likely to attract and keep 'the right class of candidate'. The other administrative, doctrinal and tactical considerations behind the Fleet Unit concept have been explained elsewhere.⁷⁹ As to finance, each unit would cost £3.7 million to build and approximately £750,000 a year to run. The Admiralty also offered to give training, technical support and doctrine, as well as allow dominion personnel to exchange with volunteers from the imperial service. At the same time, each dominion would retain full political control over its fleet unit during peace and war. Foxton immediately telegraphed home for instructions.

At Deakin's suggestion, Colonel Foxton first approached the New Zealand Premier, Sir Joseph Ward,⁸⁰ to enquire if he would consent to the formation of a joint Australasian Fleet Unit.⁸¹ Ward, however, refused. At a subsequent meeting between the Australian delegation and representatives from the Admiralty, Foxton explained that when his Premier had offered to bear the cost of a dreadnought for imperial service he had not envisaged having also to pay the running costs. The Admiralty took the point and offered, provided Australia agreed to build and maintain an entire fleet unit, to contribute £250,000 a year towards the running costs. Also thrown in was an offer to transfer the Sydney (Garden Island) naval base and victualling yard to the Commonwealth. And to appease Deakin, the Admiralty made further concessions towards full interchangeability of personnel. Fierce lobbying by Sir John Fisher, who impressed Foxton as 'a man who gives expression to his views with remarkable freedom and forcefulness', helped to convince him that the offer should be accepted. No less important was Foxton's loss of confidence in his own chief naval adviser. Creswell's destroyer scheme, he reported to Deakin on 13 August, 'fell to pieces at once under the criticisms of Fisher, Otley and others'.⁸²

On 19 September 1909, Alfred Deakin telegraphed Foxton that the Admiralty's proposals seemed in principle to be acceptable. Eight days later the Commonwealth Cabinet provisionally endorsed the fleet unit concept.⁸³ Finally, on 24 November the Federal Parliament approved by thirty-six votes to six a Naval Loan Bill that provided the finance for the construction of one Fleet Unit. The foundations had been laid for the creation of the Royal Australian Navy.

Nicholas Lambert, September 1998

⁷⁸ For an explanation of the 'battle cruiser' theory, see: Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*; N. Lambert, 'Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence', in *The Journal of Military History*, (59:4) October 1995, pp. 639–60.

⁷⁹ Lambert, *Far Flung Lines*, pp. 55–83.

⁸⁰ Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph George Ward (1856–?). Prime Minister of New Zealand 1906–12.

⁸¹ Foxton to Ward, 13 August 1909, National Archives of Australia (NAA): B197, 1894/6/131. Also see 'The Evolution and Development of an Australian Naval Policy' a lecture given by Foxton to the United Services Institution of Queensland in September 1910 and reprinted in the *Commonwealth Military Journal*, November 1911, pp. 654–70.

⁸² Foxton to Deakin, 13 August 1909, Deakin Papers, National Library of Australia: box 38, item 473 - cited in *The Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 149, nt. 43.

⁸³ Though formal approval was not finally given until 24 May 1910.

A note on sources and format

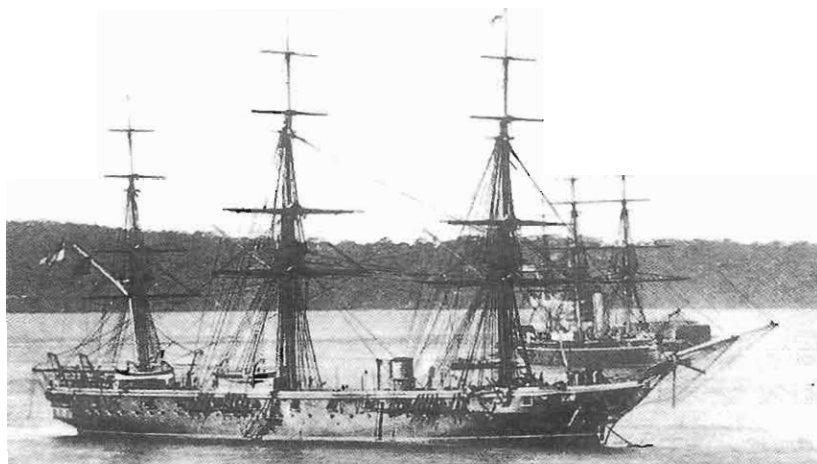
The documents selected have been obtained in the main from the Admiralty archives held at the Public Record Office in Kew, London. These have been supplemented by items from the private correspondence between successive First Lords of the Admiralty and Commanders-in-Chief of the Australia Station. The most valuable (and virtually complete) collection can be found in the papers of the second Earl of Selborne (First Lord, 1900–05) held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. There are more than 100 relevant documents. Private letters from officers commanding the Australia Station can also be found among the papers of Lord Tweedmouth (First Lord 1906–08) at the Admiralty Library, London: the Reginald McKenna papers (1908–11) at Churchill College, Cambridge; and the Chartwell trust collection of Winston Churchill papers (1911–15), also at Churchill College. Other important collections include the Admiral Cyprian Bridge papers at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich; the Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg Papers at Southampton University Library; the Admiral Lord Fisher papers at Churchill College; and the Prints collection preserved by the Admiralty Library, Ministry of Defence, London.

Relevant archival sources in Australia are fragmentary. A few records relating to the Royal Navy during the colonial period survive in the Melbourne repository of the National Archives of Australia (NAA), but these relate more to the running of the dockyard and technical issues. When responsibility for the Australia Station was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy in 1913 many records were transferred to New Zealand. Nevertheless, the National Library of Australia holds microfilm copies of many pertinent Admiralty files as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP). The AJCP filmed selections from Admiralty records relating to Australia and the Pacific (1739–1958), including letters, reports, logs and musters. British and Australian Parliamentary Papers also provide information on the Royal Navy in Australia, and in particular the establishment of the Auxiliary Squadron. The manuscript collection at the National Library holds the private papers of Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin and Andrew Fisher.

The contemporary records of the colonial naval forces are very incomplete. In most states records relating to naval activities can be found in the relevant State Archives, with a small number of records held by the National Archives of Australia. Victoria is the exception, with the majority of records held in the National Archives and only small holdings in the State Archives. Very good sources of contemporary information are the Parliamentary Papers, Government Gazettes and major newspapers.

The punctuation and format of the documents have been left as in the originals with minor exceptions. Where necessary, omissions of parts of sentences are indicated by an ellipsis (. . .) and of whole paragraphs by three asterisks (***). Editorial insertions are in square brackets.

PART I
1880–1888



The screw corvette HMS Wolverine, flagship of Commodore John Wilson, moored in Farm Cove in 1881. Beyond her are HMS Carysfort, of the visiting detached squadron, and Fort Denison. (AWM 300012)

(1)

Report by Commodore John Wilson, 22 June 1880 - PRO: ADM 1/6538, J.198.

Most confidential.

AUSTRALIA

No. 138.—Report, relative to Protection of Harbours, Trade, Coaling Depôts,
&c.

“Wolverene” at Sydney,
June 22, 1880

Sir,

With reference to your confidential letter, No. 173. M. of 16th April 1880, calling upon me to report my views as to the best mode of enabling the Squadron under my command to co-operate in the protection of the commercial harbours in Australia and New Zealand, and also as to the best means I would recommend to be adopted for the protection of trade afloat, and of Coaling Depôts, in the event of the sudden outbreak of war with a Maritime Power, I have the honour to transmit herewith a report which I have drawn up in accordance, with their Lordships' wishes, together with such other remarks as I consider pertinent to the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J.C. Wilson,
Commodore

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

A.—INTRODUCTION.

The question of protection of trade necessarily includes that of our colonies, of which there are eight within the limits of this naval station, whilst another, Singapore, is but a short distance beyond them. These colonies, with one exception, are situated within the temperate zone, and are therefore likely to become thickly populated by the white races, whilst the colony of Fiji being in the tropics can never support a large European population.

They also differ greatly in their political constitutions.

These and the physical features which are peculiar to each colony must be carefully analysed, before attempting to draw conclusions, or make suggestions on the main question.

Before attempting to discuss this very important subject, it is necessary to examine and consider well what enemy's forces these colonies are likely at any time to encounter, and the style and power of the ships pertaining thereto. It is almost superfluous to say, that this paper is written under the supposition that England retains her command of the seas, for were she to lose it, as a matter of course the colonies would go too, and the defence and force required to maintain independence of a foreign power would necessarily be totally different to what under present conditions is required.

It has been suggested as possible that during war a squadron of fast frigates, including even an ironclad, might escape the vigilance of our fleet, and make a descent

on the Australian coast; there is no doubt that such is *possible*, but I cannot allow that it is reasonably *probable*, and it appears to me that we have to deal with probabilities more than possibilities.

But to examine this branch of the subject, it must be remembered that in these days of steam and telegraphic communication the *locale* of every war ship in the world is known, and that, as a matter of fact, the moment war is declared each and every ship of any power would be watched by our cruisers. Still there is the possibility of enemies' ships evading our vessels, or we may be beaten in action, and so leave them uncontrolled; but even then it is by no means clear that they could or would make an attempt at attack.

My reason for arriving at this conclusion is, that no war ship has yet been built which can steam 2,500 miles at full speed, except some light steel vessels and it is but reasonable to conclude that enemies' vessels attacking these colonies, could only hope for success by dealing a sharp unexpected blow: therefore speed is an essential element in the calculation.

Another point is that, although coal is abundant in Australia, no judicious commander would attempt such an expedition as we are now contemplating on the chance of picking up a coal ship at sea, or of being able to get it by capture from the shore.

Thus we find that a *war ship* could not, with a reasonable hope of success, make a descent on an enemy's coast at a greater distance from a coal depôt than is represented by, say, two thirds of her full-speed coal-power.

If my hypothesis be correct, an examination of the chart will show that there are few places within the limits prescribed from which cruisers could be sent. The three nearest, possible enemies' ports, belonging to first-rate powers, from which ships of war could be despatched are:—

	<u>Miles</u>
Petropouloski, distant from Melbourne	5,900
San Francisco. " "	6,800
New Caledonia. " "	1,550

The last-named place need hardly be included, as no armament of any strength could be prepared or assembled there without the knowledge of the colonies.

It might be argued that war ships would be preceded by coal ships, and replenish at one of the numerous islands in the Pacific, but against such a premise must be set the delay it would entail, and the amount of arrangement and preparation, which would seriously diminish the chances of the attacking force, whilst it would give ample time for places likely to be the scene of attack to prepare. There are, it is true, some coaling depôts amongst the Western Pacific Islands, belonging to Germans and Americans, but as these are quite unprotected by batteries, and would at once be destroyed by the regular navy, in the event of war being declared by or with the nations to which they belong, they cannot be looked upon as depôts for war purposes.

B.—THE PROBABLE CLASS OF ENEMY VESSEL TO BE EXPECTED IN TIME OF WAR.

The class of vessel which I think the colonies should be prepared to meet, and which might, if well commanded, do immeasurable damage both to shipping and exposed ports, is the armed merchant vessel, possessing great speed and coal vitality.

Such ships could more easily evade the watchful eye of our cruisers and consuls abroad and from their coal capacity, be fitted out at remote ports, and pass unobserved, disguised as traders, over half the world.

C.—CONSTITUTION AND POLICY OF THE COLONIES.

It is not necessary to enter minutely into the constitution of each colony, for all slightly differ one from another, but only to divide them into two parts, viz., Constitutional and Crown Colonies. Of the former there are six, of the latter two.

So far as I have been able to estimate public opinion in those colonies which possess the control of their own affairs, the feeling is strongly in favour of their bearing some share in the expenses of their defence, but there exists a great difference in the views entertained as to the amount and form such aid should take.

Where a Government is nominated by universal suffrage, it is necessary, to enable us to arrive at proper conclusions, to consider well the instincts and prejudices of the masses.

In new countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, where all are hardworking men, struggling with nature for a livelihood, the presence of a permanent armed force, supported out of their earnings, is always distasteful, not from any lack of military ardour, but from the feeling that such services are living in comparative idleness, and not adding by their labours to the common weal. Such being the case, it is as well, in my opinion, whatever may be argued on the other side, at once to bow to and recognise as a fact, "that a permanent military force cannot under the present circumstances and condition of these colonies flourish."

It is true that a very creditable artillery force exists both in Victoria and New South Wales, besides a well-drilled naval service in the former colony, but they are always looked upon with a jealous eye, are invariably the first to be touched by the pruning knife of economy, and are ever on the brink of disbandment. Such being the case, there is, and must be, wanting that feeling of stability, both amongst the officers and men; necessary to thorough efficiency and discipline in a permanent force.

These are reasons inherent in the political constitutions of these democratic countries, but I have myself other strong objections to such permanent forces as now exist in Australia. I am willing to admit that such of them as I have seen are well organised and drilled, but they possess no traditions nor *esprit de corps*, and could not, I believe, be relied upon in case of any social broils within their own colonies. Were the Australian colonies united, a confederate force being larger, with personal interests and sympathies less local, might be different, but, as it is, the small force maintained in each colony can never be worth the money expended on it.

It will be seen by the accompanying table [S] that already very large sums are spent by these colonies on armament and men, and it will be one of my objects to

show how such sums of money could be better expended, at any rate in so far as naval defence is concerned.

So far I have been referring only to such colonies as, being self-governed, have a right to choose their own style of defence; the question, of course, is different with Crown colonies, where it is open to argument whether they should be required to aid in their own defence or not. I incline to the opinion that, beyond a fair proportion of volunteers, they can hardly be expected to do much for themselves, and that protection, at all events by sea, must be provided for by the Imperial Government.

D.—CONFEDERATION.

It is obvious that were all the colonies on this station confederated, or even those belonging to Australia, including Tasmania, on the subject before us an enormous saving would be the result, whilst even greater would be the advantages in efficiency and power.

It is therefore of first importance, when introducing any scheme of colonial defence, to establish some system which, whilst leaving to each all patronage and administrating power, would place the united forces in case of war under one head, and in time of peace under one system of discipline and inspection.

In the formation of a naval defence force, which is the service I, of course, more particularly refer to, there will no doubt be many objections and difficulties in the way of confederation and unity of action in case of war, but I will attempt to show how it may be possible to do so, whilst suggesting such a scheme as may be workable, even if such a desirable consummation cannot be arrived at.

The naval force suitable for these colonies must partake more of a militia than a volunteer corps, for both officers and men will have to be paid. In these colonies patronage is more essential to the governing class than in other less democratic countries, therefore no scheme of naval confederation can be expected to take which does not reserve the entire control of all promotions and appointments in each colony.

Less difficulty would be experienced in drawing up a universal code of regulations, which are essential in view of united action.

The respective Colonial Governments might also be expected to realise the advantage to be derived from the stimulus which competition undoubtedly engenders, and thus to a great extent makes up for the drawbacks inherent in small newly raised services.

The uniting medium should be the instructors from the Royal Service, and an inspecting officer of high rank, who should advise the ministers of the different colonies on service matters, and furnish periodical reports for their information and guidance; such reports to be general, covering the entire inter-colonial marine.

E.—NAVAL DEFENCES OF THE COLONIES.

The naval defences of these colonies must be divided into two heads, the one for the defence of harbours, and the other for the defence of trade and exposed towns on the sea-coast. The first I will speak of as the "local marine defence force," and the other the "seagoing defence force." Though both these corps would be under one system of government and regulation, there should be a distinct difference between them especially in the selection of the men required to man them, for whereas boat

and barge men would be most useful for inshore or harbour work, they would be out of place in vessels which have to keep the sea.

In the following suggestions I find my opinion differs to some extent from the view I understand to be held by Sir William Jervois, and also by Colonel Scratchley, in his Report on the Defences of New Zealand. It appears to me useless to advocate a system which, though it may be perfect from a military point of view, is too expensive either, to be adopted, or, if adopted, to be kept up in a state of efficiency. If I understand right, their Lordships now require of me, not to sketch out a complete system of defence, such as might be required in Europe, but a *sufficient* defence in view of any *probable* attack which might be made on these colonies, and bearing in mind the necessity of strict economy in such organisation as is essential to the permanent establishment of any such scheme; for unless economy be observed, and careful consideration be given to the instincts and prejudices of the colonists, no force can be permanent in these democratic countries.

The question, therefore, to some extent, is not whether a regular or irregular service is best, but which is most likely to be perpetuated and ready in time of war to meet the enemy.

But to return to the class of vessel I recommend for local defence. I strongly advocate the employment of gunboats, carrying guns of moderate calibre (say 10 in.) in preference to ironclads, which are too costly in the first place, and also to keep up, whilst centralising too much the defensive power, and are quite out of place for the purpose of resisting the style of attack which I have pointed out as the one most likely. "It is unnecessary to use a Naesmith's hammer to break a walnut." Gunboats of the "Staunch" class and armed like that vessel are most suitable, not only to those who would have to man them, but in most cases to the harbours to be defended: for instance, Port Phillip, with extensive sandbanks extending for miles across the entrance of the bay, parallel to or across which run the channels used by shipping, is so well adapted for defence by gunboats, that I think it would, be most unfortunate were they not used. The ironclad now at Melbourne, though, no doubt, she would be useful in defending the port, must manoeuvre in the deep channels, and represents a first cost, to say nothing of her maintenance since, much exceeding her value for that purpose. *Her boilers are now worn out, not from use but from disuse, and it will cost as much as the value of two new gunboats, such as I propose, to replace them.*

Besides gunboats, I recommend a certain number of torpedo boats, and also the registering of all steam launches with speeds of over 10 knots, to be used as improvised torpedo boats.

It is with reference to stationary torpedoes that I differ from Colonel Scratchley in his Report on the Defence of New Zealand. Stationary torpedoes are useful under certain conditions of warfare, but, in my opinion, they would be but little better than useless under the conditions of attack likely to arise on this station: for instance, let us suppose we are at war with Russia, the probability of a raid on the coast by an armed merchant vessel is a remote but possible event, the colonies are prepared up to a certain point to meet such an attack, but could hardly be expected to boom their harbours, even were such practicable, or to stop the entrance of trading vessels by night. An enemy's cruiser, calculating on the difficulty of distinguishing her from a trader, calmly steams into port; she may be seen, but is it likely that, on the chance of her being an enemy, the contact will be made, and the vessel blown up? I certainly think not, and even by day it would be easy for an enemy's ship, disguised as a trader,

to enter any port on the station. Once in, she, in most cases, would be safe from shore batteries, and if there be no gunboats or war vessels present, could dictate her own terms. Shore batteries, for much the same reason, cannot, I contend, be looked upon as more than auxiliaries to the outside, or first line of defence.

If the colonies were rich enough or willing to fortify every place requiring it, there can be no doubt that such would add much to the security of the country and people, but we are considering the best and most efficient defence force to protect a long line of coast, and a large carrying trade, which can be suggested for a given sum of money. No commander of a cruiser would be so foolish as to run his head against fortifications when both shipping and undefended towns are lying open to capture.

Fortified places are, however, important as ports of refuge and as stations for coaling, but beyond that, for the style of warfare we are contemplating; they are and must be second in importance to naval defence, whether local or seagoing.

I draw particular attention to this point as New Zealand is able to spend only 30,000*l.* on her defences; to my mind it is an error to spend it all on shore, or partial defence, whilst making no provision for cruisers.

The colonial seagoing defence force should consist exclusively of armed merchant vessels. These vessels should be specially selected for their speed and strength, suitably armed, and be required to act in concert with the Royal Naval Squadron. As an auxiliary to the Royal Service they will be exceedingly valuable, capable as they would be of keeping up communication between the regular navy and the head-quarters of the different squadrons, or looking out for and overhauling strange sails.

I would in any scheme of defence prefer working such colonial vessels in the way I propose, for the reason that intercolonial jealousy would paralyse any united action between such armed vessels, though they would act with cheerfulness and vigour under the Royal Service.

Another thing is that although Royal Naval Reserve officers may be competent to fight a single vessel, they could hardly be expected to handle a squadron commanded by men unaccustomed to act together.

F.—COLONIAL NAVAL FORCES.

The *personnel* of the Colonial Naval Forces is what I purpose now to consider.

As I have before remarked, the democratic instincts of the people are opposed to standing forces, but they appear, on the other hand, to be singularly partial to the semi-military, such as their volunteers (most wrongly so called); for instance, in the colony of New South Wales, the Assembly, whilst ever striving to reduce the permanent artillery, is as ready to increase the naval brigade, a corps which might be most useful, were it only utilised for naval purposes, instead of being drilled into inferior infantry. Following therefore the bent of public feeling, I propose that each colony should raise a naval militia by voluntary enlistment, in proportion to its requirements, that this force should be instructed by a staff of officers and seamen gunners drawn from the Royal Service, to be changed at the expiration of three years, so as to ensure thorough efficiency in both officers and men.

The men composing such a force might be of two classes, boatmen and long-shore men, to man gunboats and torpedo boats, and regular seamen from local trading vessels for the armed merchant ships. There is nothing better than a hulk in

which to drill seamen, but when one is not available a shed could be constructed on shore for that purpose; the gunboats being used for firing practice.

As this force ought not to contain a man more than would be necessary in war, all should be thoroughly efficient. To ensure that I think, each volunteer on first entry in the force ought to be put through a three months' course of drill, and, where there is a ship, kept under regular discipline. At the end of that time his worth will be known, and whether he is a desirable man to retain or not.

If he be so, he should be entered as a naval reserve man for a period of years, and be required to put in a month's drill annually. The pay of these men will materially differ according to the market value of labour at the different ports, but whilst undergoing their preliminary, and also their periodical drill they should get good pay, besides being supplied with a suit of uniform and a working dress annually. The expense of such a force would not be great, except whilst embodied, but the cheapest article is expensive unless it be useful and necessary, and to ensure that only those worth having are entered the above probationary service is imperative.

Material is to hand in most of the colonies, two already possessing naval brigades of more or less value. The weak point of their present organisation is, that there is no independent professional criticism, that political exigencies hamper them with persons of little use, if not absolutely objectionable; and there is no guarantee that the men composing these forces are either sailors or seamen; in fact, when required, they are quite as likely to turn out useless as the reverse.

Instruction and inspection by properly appointed naval officers, being quite independent, would ensure, at any rate, the exact value of each corps being known, and it would be the fault of the respective governments if they did not reach the requisite standard of efficiency.

G.—SHIPS REQUIRED FOR DEFENCE OF THE COLONIES.

In considering the style of vessels required for the defence of the colonies, with their great and even increasing trade, we must first examine the physical peculiarities of the station, and also the type, size, power, and speed of the ships to be protected.

In consequence of the keen competition which has for some years existed in the conveying trade to these colonies, company after company has appeared on the scene, with vessels, the one more magnificent than the other, until now we have several, possessing each a fleet of ocean steamers capable of making the passage from Europe or America at speeds averaging over 300 miles a day.

It is evident that, to give protection to such ships, the navy must possess vessels of even greater speed than those to be protected. To do so, cruisers will have to be constructed with a speed of not less than 17 knots an hour, nor must the measured mile be the only test by which such speed is gauged, for it is really no guide as to what the ship can do in heavy weather. Such cruisers, therefore, should be tested either by making a voyage of some duration against first-class merchant vessels, or against a typical ship under all conditions of wind and sea. Supposing, for instance, one of the ocean steamers belonging to the Orient Company was chased by, say, the "Raleigh," off the south coast of Australia during the prevailing westerly winds, blowing force 7 to 9, both being 15-knot ships, but little difference in their respective positions during the chase might be expected, until the Orient steamer, being desirous of throwing off

her unwelcome consort, turns head to wind and sea, when in all probability she would run the chase, hampered as she is aloft, out of sight in a couple of hours.

This illustration will explain my views, I think; to protect our ocean steamers we require ships of war built much as they are, and much larger and longer than those which have hitherto been constructed for the protection of trade. Speed and coal endurance are of first importance; armament and evolutionary handiness are both useless unless you can first come up with the enemy. The ocean steamers now running to and from these colonies carry from 1,200 to 2,000 tons of coal, independently of cargo, whereas there is not a ship of war on this station nor has there been one in my time, which carries 300 tons. The men of war kept out here are, for the purpose of protecting trade on the high seas, quite as useless as would be the old sailing frigates of 30 years ago.

By the annexed table will be seen exactly their speed and the distance they are respectively capable of steaming with one coaling; that table, compared with the one showing the performances of steamers belonging to merchant companies, will give a good idea of the value of the former for protecting the latter. There is not, and has not been, a ship on this station which could be relied upon to steam to Auckland from Sydney at full speed, or to Wellington or Adelaide, distances of not more than 1,200 miles, allowing them, too, double the time taken ordinarily by the mail companies and intercolonial steamers.

I draw particular attention to these facts to show that, though our war ships now on the station might be utilised for defensive purposes, in port, or along the coast, they could not, for want of speed and coal-carrying space, be any protection to our trade, or bring an enemy's cruiser, capable of injuring our mercantile marine, to action. Nor can they make their way with speed or certainty in cases of emergency from one capital of these colonies to another, nor can any reliance be placed on the time they would occupy in going even from Sydney to Melbourne, a distance of less than 600 miles.

In building cruisers to compete with merchant vessels, the heavy rig of our ships must be reduced to such an extent that, like them, they will never be without steam.

Such vessels will then be more dependent on coal than those now sufficiently masted to do the bulk of their work under sail. Entire dependence on coal will necessitate the establishment of protected coal depôts, which must be situated one from another, not farther than the distance represented by the average coal endurance of our ships at full speed.

The armament of the class of cruiser I now advocate would not require to be heavy, and I have pointed out in another place that, for various reasons therein given, I do not contemplate any attack except from armed merchant vessels. Six 64-prs. and a 6½ ton pivot gun would, in my opinion, be an excellent armament for the smaller class, the tonnage of which should be at least 3,000 tons, to carry 1,200 tons of coal and have a speed of not less than 16 knots. A larger class mounting ten 64-prs. and one pivot gun, of 4,000 tons and 17 knots speed, with stowage for 2,000 tons of coal. Both classes to be rigged as topsail schooners on fore and main, and barque rig aft, flying courses and large fore and aft sails; all top hamper to be easily and expeditiously struck when going head to wind.

H.—COAL DEPÔTS.

One of the most important points to be considered is the number and position of the coal depôts on this station.

For convenience I will divide them into three classes:—

First.—Those situated in fortified harbours or specially protected by guns.

Second.—Those which, although not protected by fortifications, are under the British flag.

Third.—Those which, although not within the territory of any recognised power, are owned by one.

Of the last kind there are several situated at different islands in the Western Pacific, chiefly under the German flag; these I look upon as worse than useless to us in the event of war, as, being undefended, and beyond the jurisdiction of civilised powers, they could be utilised for the purposes of aggression unless watched by one of our ships. These, on the eve of war, should be purchased at any cost, and, if requisite, destroyed.

With regard to the second class, every means should, in case of hostilities, be taken to throw up sufficient temporary defence to meet a possible attack, and such depôts should be kept as much as possible under the surveillance of the squadron. It is, however, only on those depôts which are fortified that reliance can be placed during war, and it is therefore to them now that I will draw special attention. A glance at the chart will show pretty nearly where it would be expedient to have coal during war, viz.:—

King George's Sound, first in importance.

*Sydney.

Portland.

*Glenelg (Adelaide).

*Brisbane.

Thursday Island.

Auckland.

*Wellington.

Fiji.

Maran Sound or other part of the Solomon Islands.

*Hobart Town.

Launceston.

These marked * are fortified, or in course of being so.

The protection of these coal depôts need not be very extensive or expensive if the guns are kept in store at the naval head quarters, and the ground purchased ready Earth-works could easily be thrown up when war is imminent, and arrangements made for their defence; and I suggest that, for this purpose, a reserve of 200 marines be stationed at Sydney, whence, should the necessity arise, they could easily be transferred to their various stations.

I.
SHIPS WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY ON THE AUSTRALIAN STATION
IN TIME OF WAR.

In the event of war with a first-rate power the following ships would be requisite properly to defend the Australian station: Royal Naval Ships, eight, of which four at least should be of the larger size (as suggested), and four of the smaller. These to be supplemented by nine or ten armed steamers from the different colonies, as follows:—

Western Australia	One.
South Australia	One.
Victoria	Two.
Tasmania	One.
New South Wales	Two.
Queensland	One.
New Zealand	Two.

It is doubtful whether Western Australia could or should, as a Crown colony, be required to furnish a cruiser, but it would be as well if she could.

The squadron, were I in command, and supposing that only detached cruisers, such as I have, throughout this general report, contended to be the assailants most likely to be met with, should be disposed of as follows:—

*One ship of war and one armed steamer off King George's Sound.

*One ship of war and one armed steamer off Portland.

*One ship of war and one armed steamer to cruise between Sydney and the Tasmanian coast.

One ship of war and one armed steamer off Auckland, to cover the Bay of Islands coal ports, and keep open communication with Fiji.

One armed steamer between Sydney and Brisbane.

One ship of war to cruise off Thursday Island, keeping open Torres Straits, and covering the Queensland trade.

One armed steamer between Brisbane and Torres Straits.

One ship of war at Wellington, which, assisted by an armed steamer, should protect the Middle Island of New Zealand.

One ship of war to be stationed at Fiji to defend that colony, and, as far as practicable, keep up communication with the ship cruising off Auckland.

One ship of war to be stationed at Hobart Town for the defence of the south and east coast of Tasmania.

*The ships of war marked thus to be large cruisers, the remainder of the smaller size.

It will be observed that I place the largest cruisers where the wind is usually strong, and where our carrying trade is most valuable and extensive.

K.—GUNBOATS AND TORPEDO BOATS.

The number of gunboats and torpedo boats which may be considered as sufficient to meet any probable attack is as follows:—

	Gunboats.	Torpedo Boats.	Improvised Torpedo Launches.
West Australia	1	1	4
South Australia	2	1	4
Victoria	4	2	6
Launceston	1	-	2
Hobart Town	2	2	4
New South Wales	2	2	6
Brisbane	1	-	4
Wellington	2	1	4
Auckland	2	2	4
Christchurch (Littleton)	-	-	2
Fiji	-	-	4

The gunboats and torpedo boats must of course be specially built, the latter for the Whitehead, if possible; but the improvised boats, which ought to play an important part in the harbour defence system, should be such steamboats as, from their speed and strength, were best suited for the purpose. The fittings for such boats I, of course, contemplate being kept in store ready for use.

L.—ARMAMENT OF GUNBOATS, &c.

M.—PERSONNEL OF NAVAL CONTINGENT.

The *personnel* requisite for the Naval Contingent from each colony will be:—

Colony or Town.	Gun and Torpedo Boats.		Armed Steamers.		Totals.	
	Officers of all Grades.	P. Officers and Men of all Grades.	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
South Australia	11	75	12	160	23	235
West Australia	8	58	12	160	20	218
Victoria	20	126	26	340	46	466
Launceston	5	34	-	-	5	34
Hobart Town	12	86	12	160	24	246
New South Wales	14	68	26	340	40	408
Queensland	7	46	12	160	19	206
Wellington	11	77	14	180	25	257
Auckland	12	86	12	160	24	246
Fiji	4	24	-	-	4	24

N.—INSTRUCTORS AND INSTRUCTION.

I have sketched out what appears to me a suitable and sufficient naval force for these colonies, both in *matériel* and *personnel*, and I now come to that which is to inspire the whole, and give to these services that vitality and stimulus so imperatively necessary to any high standard of excellence, but which, from the lack of tradition or competition, I hold to be wanting in small local services, resulting too often in mere outward show and parade, where no *esprit de corps* can exist, and without any professional knowledge or pride. It is through the system of instruction and supervision that I propose to introduce this wanting leaven. Royal naval officers and

seamen gunners must be drawn from home in the proportion shown in the accompanying table. Each colony to have a gunnery lieutenant or a commander at the head of their naval establishments, according to the size of the corps. The entire instructing staff to be rigidly changed every three years. I place importance on this point, for instructing is in itself such a strain on the mind that change is necessary, but, besides it is advisable to ensure that all improvements in drill and arms used afloat are properly taught.

Twice a year the naval force in each colony should be carefully inspected and reviewed by an officer of high rank, but who should belong to no special colony. This officer should make a minute report on each corps, drawing inferences from and making comparisons between those of the different colonies, thus stimulating both instructors and instructed to the utmost. How such an officer should be appointed and what rank he should hold is a question not for me to suggest, but it would undoubtedly add to his independence were he both paid and appointed as "Inspector of Colonial Navies," from home, and, as is usual in democratic countries, the higher the rank held the greater will be his influence.

With the exception of the Inspecting Officer, all the officers and men drawn from the Navy ought to be paid by the colonies to which they are lent, and I think that they (the colonies) will be found not only ready to do so, but be prepared to remunerate them on a liberal scale.

O.—INSTRUCTING STAFF.

P.—LIGHTHOUSES.

Q.—CONCLUSION.

In concluding this paper I do not consider that the subject is exhausted, for, in reality, most points are but lightly touched upon; I have, as far as I can, confined myself to general principles, leaving details to follow. At the same time it has been necessary to enlarge on subjects more abstract than direct, in order to explain my reasons for arriving at certain conclusions.

I do not wish it to be inferred that I am opposed to fortifications, because I have in some cases objected to them; what I really mean is, that where only a certain sum of money is available, cruisers are of greater importance than fixed batteries, for a cruiser can not only defend a port against any probable attack, but chase and capture the aggressor.

It is, to my mind, in a combination of the two (fortifications and ships) that security will be found; but where money is limited, as it is in these new countries, and where the attacking force can never, so long as we hold the seas, be anything more than one or two armed merchant ships, expensive fortifications such as are being constructed at enormous cost throughout these colonies, absorbing all the money available for defensive purposes, I contend are out of place.

In the suggestions made I have studied economy both as to first cost and maintenance, whilst securing all requisite efficiency. Should the number of ships or men be

considered either excessive or the reverse, it may be easily altered without prejudice to the general principle.

(Signed) J. C. WILSON,
Commodore.

"Wolverene," at Sydney,
22nd June 1880.

R.—MERCHANT STEAMERS, THEIR TONNAGE, SPEED, COAL CAPACITY, &c., AS SHOWN AGAINST SHIPS OF WAR ON THE AUSTRALIA STATION.

Ships of War

Ships.	Full Speed.	Average Speed.	Coal Capacity.	Distance can Steam at Full Speed.	Distance can Steam at 10 Knots per Hour.	Speed against Wind. Force 8.	Reduction due to Colonial Coal.
	Knots.	Knots.	Tons.	Knots.	Knots.	Knots.	Per Cent.
Wolverene	11	6.5	270	990	1112.5	4 to 5	9
Danae	11	6.5	240	1257.3	1523	5.	10
Emerald	11	7	240	1245.2	1519	5.	15
Cormorant	8.16	6	140	1132.6	-	3.4	15
Sapphire	11	7	240	1360.7	1655	5.	15

Merchant Steamers

Company.	Ships.	Gross Tonnage.	Full Speed. Knots.	Average Speed. Knots.	Coal Capacity Tons.	Daily Consumption Tons.	Speed against Wind. Force 8.	Remarks.
Australian Steam Navigation Company	Alexandra	681	11	9¼	150	18	No record obtained.	Local trade.
	City of Adelaide	1,211	11	9½	330	33		
	City of Brisbane	634	11	10	140	31		
	City of Melbourne	838	12	10½	250	20		
	Katoomba	1,006	11	10	210	24		
	Ly-e-e-moon	991	12	10½	260	24		
	Watonga	997	12	10¾	200	29		
Eastern and Australian Company	Brisbane	1,503	12	-	360	25	"	Torres Straits and Singapore.
	Bowen	1,503	12	-	360	25	"	
	Normanby	983	10	-	175	15	"	
Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company	India	2,859	15	11½	674	42	9 to 10 knots	The crews of the P. & O. steamers consist of English officers, foreign European quartermasters, and men Lascars.
	Siam	2,655	12½	11½	797	48	"	
	Assam	2,655	12½	11½	797	50	"	
	Mongolia	2,434	14	11½	547	38	"	
	Bangalore	2,169	12½	11½	420	35	"	
	Tanjore	2,129	12½	11½	558	30	"	
Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company	Australia	2,737	14½	12	1,500	50	"	
	City of Sydney	3,432	14½	12	2,000	55	"	
	City of New York	3,432	14½	12	2,000	55	"	
	Zealandia	2,737	15	12	1,500	50	"	
Orient	Cotopaxi	4,028	15	12 to 13	1,800	65	10 knots	The crews of the Orient ships consist of all English, each vessel carrying 45 thorough seamen, including officers, distinct from stewards and firemen.
	Aconagua	4,112	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	Chimborazo	3,847	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	Cuzco	3,849	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	Garonne	3,876	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	John Elder	4,152	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	Liguria	4,666	15	"	1,800	70	"	
	Orient	3,832	16	13 to 14	2,700	90	"	
	Potosi	5,386	15	12 to 13	1,800	65	"	
	Sorata	4,219	15	"	1,800	65	"	
	Lusitania	3,832	15	"	1,800	58	"	

S.—TABLE SHOWING ANNUAL EXPENDITURE IN SEVERAL COLONIES
FOR MAINTENANCE OF LAND AND NAVAL FORCES

Colony.	Annual Expenditure.			
	Land Forces.	Standing Navy.	Naval Brigade.	Totals.
	£	£	£	£
Victoria	40,683	38,390	1,140	80,213
South Australia	25,212	-	-	25,212
New South Wales	68,059	-	5,817	73,876

No Reports received from other Colonies.

T.—TABLE SHOWING DISTANCES BETWEEN SYDNEY AND THE
PRINCIPAL PLACES ON THE AUSTRALIAN STATION

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Sydney	Melbourne	570
	Portland	660
	Adelaide	960
	King George's Sound	1,820
	Fremantle	2,170
	Brisbane	480
	Thursday Island	1,500
	Auckland	1,260
	Wellington	1,230
	Christchurch	1,380
	Port Chalmers	1,560
	Hobart Town	600
	Launceston	500
	Levuka	1,700

U.—TABLE SHOWING THE DISTANCES OF POSSIBLE ENEMIES' PORTS

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Miles</u>
San Francisco	Sydney	6,510
	Melbourne	7,100
	Hobart Town	7,050
	Auckland	5,900
	Levuka	4,740
Petropaulski	Fremantle	6,240
	Sydney	5,290
	Melbourne	5,860
	Hobart Town	5,900
	Auckland	5,480
Valparaiso	Auckland	5,760
	Hobart Town	6,660
	Melbourne	7,140
	Sydney	6,240
	Newcastle	6,220

(2)

Enclosure to report by Commodore Wilson - PRO: ADM 1/6538, J.198.

Minute by Rear Admiral A. E. Hoskins, C.B., dated
August 17th, 1880

I have read with interest Commodore Wilson's proposals, but differ from the conclusions he has arrived at in many important points.

To answer his suggestions *seriatim*, would involve writing a paper of almost equal length, but I will state concisely what my views are.

As far as the defence of the ports is concerned, I agree with Colonel Scratchley that each place of sufficient importance should have defences in the shape of batteries and torpedoes equal to the task of repelling the descent of a small squadron. This is especially necessary in view of the wide extent of the station, and the numerous vulnerable points of importance.

It would be a mistake, I think, for the naval commander to break up his force as proposed by Commodore Wilson, and the proper course to pursue would be to keep his ships together ready to meet the enemy's wherever he could find them. So far removed from their resources and base, there would be little fear, I think, of their dispersing widely to molest our trade, but, if they did, no steps to correspond could be taken till the fact was ascertained.

The proposal for the colonies to hire and arm merchant vessels as cruisers seems to me simply impossible, and, if it were possible, that it would take these vessels from their legitimate use, viz., to maintain the supplies and commerce of the colonies.

To supplement the batteries and torpedoes, and prevent an entry of the port by an enemy's cruiser undetected till too late,—which, however, I think rather far-fetched,—I am in favour of a small class of vessels such as the "Viper" and "Vixen" improved on. They would be useful also in driving an enemy, repelled by the shore batteries, off the coast.

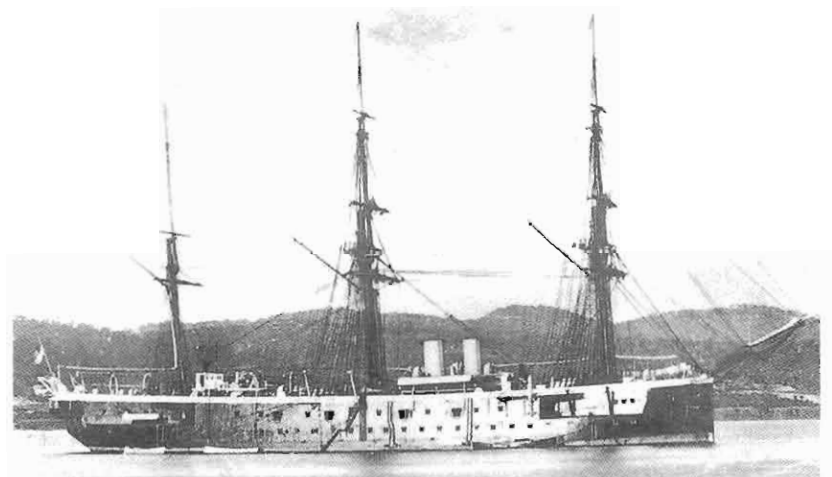
The recommendations as to the coal depôts I am quite unable to agree with. King George's Sound I have already written about. It would in my opinion be a source of danger and weakness instead of strength. The fewer coal depôts we have the stronger we can make them, and the more efficiently we can protect them. I think with the Commodore no enemy would send ships so far from their base to molest our colonies and our commerce without securing a coal supply. This could only be found in Australia at Newcastle and Ellawarra, and in New Zealand at the Russell and the Bay of Islands. It seems, however, that an enemy would first seize these points, which would give him what must be indispensable to success, and would paralyse us.

To man the ships I have described the Naval Brigades at present in existence would suit admirably and become an efficient force with little additional training. The ships would cost little while laid up, though of course their boilers must be renewed periodically.

As landings can be effected in most places which would turn the defences, disciplined troops of some sort must be forthcoming to a certain extent, and the forces at present maintained are on the whole popular.

Confederation is a talking word, but to my mind impossible in Australia—the mutual jealousies of the colonies and the great distances, with the power of feinting at

one place and seriously attacking another before troops could be moved backward and forward, must prevent it ever being seriously taken into consideration in a general plan of defence.



The armoured cruiser HMS Nelson, flagship of the Australia Station, during a visit to Hobart in 1884. (AWM 302451)

(3)
Report on "Australia Station" by Captain Cyprian A.G. Bridge RN, 1883
- Admiralty Library, London.

No. 274.

"Nelson", at Sydney,
October 23, 1883.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for their Lordships' information the enclosed confidential report drawn up by Captain Bridge of HMS "ESPIÈGLE" on the Naval Geography of the Australian Station, together with suggestions for the protection of our commerce afloat, and the principal commercial ports and coal depôts within its limits, and a proposed mode of attack upon a fortified foreign position on the station [Noumea]. (See Admiralty Confidential letter M. No.200 of the 1st December 1882.)

I feel sure that their Lordships will appreciate the zeal and ability with which Captain Bridge has, in this elaborate and exhaustive report, dealt with the important subjects therein raised.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JAMES E. ERSKINE,
Commodore

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

AUSTRALIAN STATION
NAVAL GEOGRAPHY
AND
PROTECTION OF BRITISH PORTS AND COMMERCE

REPORT
BY
CAPTAIN CYPRIAN A.G. BRIDGE, R.N.
(HMS "ESPIÈGLE")

STRATEGIC HYDROGRAPHY OF THE AUSTRALIAN STATION.

19. The strategic hydrography of the station presents features which are prominent illustrations of the natural advantages which may be relied upon to help a well devised scheme of defence. The position of our Australasian colonies, lying at the utmost distance possible from the territories of the great states of Europe and America, is in itself an almost impregnable safeguard against invasion. Nature and the course of history, to which they owe remoteness of situation and the good fortune of having no neighbours of importance except their fellow-countrymen, have effectually secured the inhabitants of these colonies against any risk of attack on a large scale, on one condition however, that condition is that adequate naval defence be provided for.

The advance of an enemy contemplating any operation against our antipodean dependencies on a scale sufficiently great to permit hopes of permanent, or even of somewhat prolonged occupation, must be across extensive tracts of ocean. In this alone lies considerable risk of failure. It is scarcely conceivable that any expedition of the kind would be undertaken in the face of determined attempts on the part of the British Navy to prevent it.

20. We have lately had practical experience of the difficulties of transporting a military force even in a time of profound maritime peace [Sudan]. That these difficulties were completely surmounted by the Transport Department—long noted for its incomparable efficiency—of the greatest Naval Power in the world is no proof whatever that greater difficulties would be overcome by a nation less strong at sea in the teeth of the opposition offered by a Navy which will have only itself to blame if it is not always in superior force at the critical points. A few figures may support this view. The following details have been taken from the French *Revue Maritime*. To despatch from England to Egypt last summer 780 officers, 15,500 men, and 5,500 horses, besides apparently Her Majesty's Troopships, 44 ships measuring 143,000 tons were required. For the transport of provisions, stores, forage, &c. 15 ships of 17,500 tons were necessary. It is likely that many of these vessels made more than one trip. (*Revue Maritime*, December 1882, pp. 616–8). Sir Thomas Brassey in the second volume of his work (p. 241) says that in 1878 the whole steam tonnage of France was 335,000, of Germany 254,000, of Russia 105,000. So that the number of tons of steam shipping required for the movement of about half an army corps was equal to one half of that possessed by France, two-thirds of that belonging to Germany, and more than all belonging to Russia.

21. There are two important ports in the colonies of European nations in which expeditions might be organised with a certain facility; these ports are not far from part of the Australian coast. Sourabaya is 1,200 miles from Port Darwin, and is the chief naval station of the Dutch in the East Indies. Should the view held by some ever turn out to be correct, and the colonies and naval forces of the Netherlands pass into the hands of a powerful European state already provided with a respectable navy, and ambitions of becoming eminent at sea, Sourabaya will certainly deserve a good deal of attention. Its present condition makes it but little more formidable to Australia than Manila, 1,800 miles from Port Darwin. Saigon, the capital of the great French colony of Cochin-China, to the local strategical advantages of which two visits to it in an armour-clad enable me to testify, lies at a distance from Port Darwin of 2,000 miles. An expeditionary force of respectable strength might certainly be equipped at Saigon. Its despatch to British territory would be a hazardous undertaking.

22. Our own recent experience has taught us what the movement of a body of troops of even moderate strength from an Oriental dependency means. To send from Bombay to Egypt 200 officers, 7,200 fighting men, and 7,500 followers, with 7,300 animals, we required last summer 51 transports, three mail steamers, and one Indian Government vessel. (*Revue Maritime*, December 1882). No doubt foreign troops would be packed more closely than ours usually are. No European troops, however, are likely to be more crowded on board ship than were the Chilians in their war with Peru. On one occasion a Chilean transport embarked no fewer than 800 horses. To

move less than 14,000 men a distance of only 700 miles in a fair weather sea 25 vessels were employed by the Chilian Minister of War. Including convoying men-of-war it may be accepted as certain that no expeditionary military force will be despatched from Saigon unless nearly 30 ships go together. One of two routes may be chosen: either that which runs by Singapore, a place at which it is hardly possible that we shall not have collected an adequate squadron to prevent the success of the expedition; or that, beset for great part of the way with dangers, which goes past another of our colonies, Labuan.

23. Possibly the Imperial authorities are agreed that our Australian possessions run no risk of invasion. Such is not the conviction of the colonists themselves; and with them, be it remembered, the power of ultimately deciding on a defensive policy rests, and with them alone. A comparison of the sums expended by the different colonies* on their several military establishments with those expended on whatever naval establishments they may have formed, as well as the more thorough, however still imperfect manner in which the former have been organised, prove which idea has been uppermost in the public mind.

Colony.	Date.	Military.			Naval.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Victoria	Dec. 31st 1881	28,033	9	11	21,594	3	0
New South Wales	1881	118,719	0	8	7,164	17	2
Tasmania	1881	5,548	18	7	-	-	-
Total for three colonies		152,301	9	2	28,759	0	2

Within the last few months the question of defence has been publicly discussed in New South Wales. To those who followed this discussion, in the course of which a proposal to organise corps of cavalry (!) was received with favour, it was clear that the people in general believed that the greatest danger to Australia was to be looked for in attacks on her seaboard and invasion of her territory rather than in molestation of that important commerce which she carries on principally with the mother-country, and the security of which is essential to the export of her products and—so long as those products are what they are—to her prosperity or even existence.

24. Probably nothing will awaken the popular mind in the colonies to the true character of the risk which they must expect to incur in war but a plain statement of the vital necessity to them of a proper system of naval defence. . . . If our colonies in the southern hemisphere be provided with a suitable naval defence invasion of them may be erased from the list of possibilities.

* In the New Zealand statistical volume the naval expenditure is not separated from the military. The strength of the personnel of the two forces, however, is stated (page xxii., volume for 1881) as—

Cavalry	-	820		
Artillery	-	989		
Engineers	-	253		
Rifles	-	5,300		
Total	-	7,362	Naval	- 966

† Since this passage was written two articles have appeared (on March 29th and March 30th, 1883) in the leading newspapers of Sydney, which show that in that city, at all events, invasion or attacks on the territory of Australia are more apprehended than molestation of ocean commerce.

II.—PROTECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL PORTS ON THE AUSTRALIAN STATTON.

25. No country in the world lends itself so readily to naval defence as Australia. Of New Zealand, being insular, this is even more obviously true. The coast line of the larger colonies offers facilities for defence afloat quite unknown elsewhere. Even of Western Australia and the Northern Territory the remoteness from formidable Foreign states constitutes an exceptionally valuable protection. But if the coast line of particular colonies is examined this truth will be the more readily perceived.

30. The strategic excellence of the coast-line of most of the colonies is reinforced in a very striking degree by the hydrographical characteristics of the principal ports, *Port Phillip*, *Port Jackson*, *Port Nicholson*, are, rather than mere harbours, great inlets of the sea with narrow entrances. These entrances are beset with shoals to an extent not sufficient to impede their ordinary navigation, but at the same time quite sufficient to aid materially in the arrangement of an effective system of torpedo defence. The dimensions of these great inlets admit of a remoteness of position, with respect to the entrance channels, both for the cities of which they are the ports, and for the anchorage of the ships frequenting them, that should go far towards ensuring immunity from the fire of an enemy's guns, if only torpedoes are judiciously laid down and suitably supported.

33. That the invasion of any of our Australian colonies, including New Zealand and Tasmania, is scarcely to be reckoned amongst the possibilities has, I think, been already shown. It will be well now to explain why it is that anything like a serious attack by powerful battle ships on any of their ports appears to be nearly equally unlikely. It is desirable that this explanation should be taken in hand. Even those persons in Australia who do not anticipate foreign invasion are persuaded that their coast towns would, in a war, run imminent risk of being attacked by armour-clads. Now to admit that even a single foreign armour-clad could succeed in reaching an Australian port in a condition to make an attack on it, several large assumptions have to be made. First, and this is the least of them, it must be conceded that she has succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the British navy. Secondly, it must be allowed that the navy to which she belongs is so well provided with armoured vessels, that it can readily spare one of them,—and one is no small fraction of even so large a fleet as the British,—for distant service whence there must be at least all equal chance that she will never return. Next it must be granted that her possessors are prepared to resign all the advantages that she would afford them in protecting their own outlying territories. For it will be readily seen that to send off on the outbreak of war to places some thousands of miles distant the armour-clad belonging to, say, the French China squadron, or to the Russian Siberian squadron, would seriously curtail the defensive appliances of Saïgon or Vladivostok. Again, she must be supposed to be accompanied by consorts which could assist her in the work of clearing obstructions from the entrances to the ports most likely to be held worth attacking, and that such a force could find coal throughout its voyage as easily as might a single ship. Were the obstructions not removed, even an armour-clad could effect little against the principal

Australian ports. Moreover we should have to admit the truth of what would perhaps be the largest assumption of all, that the enemy is ignorant of the fact that the maximum of damage may be done to Australia with the minimum of risk to himself by assailing her maritime communications.

34. Let there be opposed to these assumptions, which are only some of those that must be made before even the possibility of danger to Australian seaports from armour-clads can be admitted, what experience has proved are facts. In time of war the combatant which has but a small number of powerful battle ships has almost invariably kept them at home. Even in time of peace, of such a peace that a period of perhaps three months may easily convert it into a war, Germany, Austria, and Italy do not send their armour-clads away from European waters. France and Russia do keep some of theirs on foreign stations: but both of these powers have outlying dominions to protect, and it is quite certain that when a French armour-clad is at Saigon or a Russian at Vladivostok, both of those places are secure against attack by any British force which does not include a vessel of the same description. There is not a single armour-clad in the world, except a few belonging to England, which could steam from her usual station to any Australian seaport that would be worth attacking in comparison with the risk.

38. The above considerations lead to the belief that, as our colonies at the antipodes have no reason to fear invasion, so also is there little cause for apprehending an attack by armour-clads on their seaports. Attacks on these places by squadrons of un-armoured cruisers are not altogether unlikely and should be provided for. The best stationary defences against unarmoured vessels are torpedoes combined with batteries mounting long range guns that can be, easily worked, such for example as the new 6-in. B.L. pieces. These guns would be equal, indeed more than equal, to engaging the vessels, and might also without any great waste of power be used as the protecting artillery of the system of under-water defence, artillery that is intended to secure the mines from removal or neutralisation by the enemy's boats. It is probable that a minute investigation of the conditions under which an attack on Albany might be expected to be made would result in showing that guns of the nature above specified would be the largest necessary to render that place practically impregnable. To spend money therefore on any permanent works of a more formidable character at most Australasian ports would be not only to waste it, but to divert it from objects, such as floating defences, which are far more useful, indeed are essential, to the security of the colonies.

III.—PROTECTION OF OUR COMMERCE AFLOAT ON THE AUSTRALIAN STATION.

41. The vulnerability of that commerce, and the necessity of devising special means of protecting it where it is most liable to danger, will appear from a statement of its value, and from a consideration of the conditions under which it is carried on. Australia and New Zealand owe their prosperity to unobstructed ocean thoroughfares. The introduction and export of commodities into or from any colony by land are

insignificant compared with the traffic by sea. The following figures, except in the cases of South Australia and Western Australia are taken from official statistics supplied to me by the different Governments:—

Colony.	Year.	Sea-borne Imports.		Sea-borne Exports.	
		From the United Kingdom.	Total.	To the United Kingdom.	Total.
		£	£	£	£
Victoria	1881	7,518,095	13,332,611	7,784,025	15,194,572
New South Wales	1881	8,986,838	15,878,364	7,561,114	12,285,344
*South Australia	1880 and 1881	3,002,342	5,244,064	3,695,498	4,407,757
*Western Australia	1880 and 1881	180,237	404,831	263,346	502,770
Tasmania	1881	340,162	1,431,144	512,094	1,555,576
New Zealand	1881	4,530,316	7,457,045	4,475,601	6,060,866
Totals		24,557,790	43,738,059	24,280,678	40,006,885

* The figures for South and Western Australia are taken from various sources; the United Kingdom exports and imports are those for 1880.

Queensland has been omitted from the above enumeration for a reason which will be given directly. The whole of the imports from the United Kingdom and of the exports to it enumerated in the foregoing table pass along the two great trade routes spoken of in a former paragraph. Of the difference between the amounts of these and the total amounts imported and exported a large proportion also follows the same paths. The whole wealth of our Australian colonies is really on the sea, and nearly all of it traverses two comparatively narrow strips of ocean. Even the commodities which find their way to, and leave every colony except Queensland by steamer, are, as a rule, transported along a route which passes Cape Leeuwin.

42. In 1881 Queensland imported goods to the value of 3,140,187*l.*, of which 1,307,089*l.* worth came from the United Kingdom. To that place were exported goods equal in money value to 1,160,208*l.* out of a total export of 3,038,140*l.* Of these some portion came round the Cape and were sent around the Horn, but the larger amount passed through the Torres Straits, an ocean thoroughfare annually increasing in importance, and, thanks to its hydrographical features, eminently capable of defence.

43. A mere statement of the values of exports and imports, however, gives a very inadequate idea of the magnitude of the interests on the ocean which it would be far more easy for a maritime enemy to disturb or annihilate, than it would be for him to capture or compel the surrender of an Australian seaport. I have extracted the follow figures from the copious statistics placed at my disposal by the local administrations. These show the tonnage of the shipping arriving in Australian ports in one year except as regards South and Western Australia for which I had to rely on information upon unofficial publications, that year being 1881. . . . All the British sailing ships from the United Kingdom came round the Cape of Good Hope, as probably did many of the British colonial.

Shipping arriving at *Australian* ports, 1881.

[table omitted]

44. From the above it appears that at least 450 British vessels of 600,000 tons passed Cape Leeuwin during the year. The value of the sailing ships alone without counting their cargoes must at moderate estimate, considering how splendid the ships in the Australian trade usually are, of but 10*l.* per ton have amounted to nearly 4,000,000*l.* I have not added up the figures in the various columns containing statistics of British colonial as distinguished from *home* British vessels, for the greater part of the former finds employment in the local and intercolonial trade; but it must be remembered that this trade would require protection in war and that protection to be efficient must be naval.

46. . . . From the above it may be fairly estimated that the hulls alone of British sailing ships on the route *on any given day* must fully equal in value a sum of between 600,000*l.* and 700,000*l.*

47. Having called attention to the ocean highways which would have to be kept open in war if the prosperity certainly, and probably the existence of our Australasian ocean trade dependencies are to be preserved, it is now necessary to show, in general terms, the principles on which the protection of the trade following these paths should be based. Shortly stated these principles may be said to be—

1st. The selection and suitable occupation of certain points.

2nd. Adequate patrolling of the waters within a certain radius of these points.

48. It must be explained that "suitable occupation" does not necessarily mean the garrisoning or fortification of any place. Some places may be suitably occupied if the naval force in their neighbourhood is sufficient to keep the enemy from seizing them. The chief strategic points are St. Paul's Island, Albany, Kangaroo Island, Hobart, Stewart's Island, and either Wellington or Port Lyttelton. Some of these possess great importance as centres of local naval defence in addition to their value as bases on which the force specially designated to protect certain portions of the trade route should rest. At present, however, it is only points answering to the latter condition that are being considered. St. Paul's Island is, it is true, several hundred miles outside the limits of the station, but its position is such that it must be taken note of here. Occasional anchorage, quite enough to permit of vessels being coaled, can be found at it, and the presence of a moderate naval force in its vicinity should be sufficient for its suitable occupation.

49. I submit the following suggestion of principles which should guide us in arranging for the utilisation of the above-named strategic points and for the protection of the trade routes passing by them. Cruisers should never cruise singly. To each of the strategic bases should be told off at least a pair of cruisers to patrol the waters in the neighbourhood of the base, but on and about the route passing it. There would be—

Two cruisers for the	St. Paul's division.
Two " "	Albany division.
Two " "	Kangaroo Island division.
Two " "	Hobart division.
Two " "	Stewart's Island division.
Two " "	Wellington (or Port Lyttleton) division.

In addition to these twelve ships there should be at least two cruisers to traverse the whole route, or rather to move along sections of it, replacing one or both of the cruisers already stationed at the several bases, when one or both might require to return to the nearest port for coal or repairs. The vessels at St. Paul's could be coaled by a special service of coaling steamers coming from and returning to Mauritius.

50. The cruisers would probably be of something like 3,000 tons displacement, with considerable coal-endurance, and a working, as distinguished from a "measured mile," speed of 12 knots. They need hardly be heavily armed; four 6-in. B.L. guns, or pieces of that type; or two 6-in. and four 40-pr. B.L. guns should be sufficient. They should carry at least six machine guns. Supposing that each cruiser cost about 125,000*l.*, one million and three-quarters sterling would be enough to secure the adequate protection of a trade, the hulls of the sailing vessels employed only on the out-ward branch of which fully equal four millions, the value of their cargoes, of the outward bound steamers and their cargoes, of all the homeward-bound sailing vessels, and of most of the homeward-bound steamers being left out of consideration. As 10*l.* per ton has been put as the value of the outward-bound sailing fleet it may be worth while to mention that the annual cost, not the total cost, of building the ships, which of course is far greater, of the French Navy, about equals in amount the tonnage of the mercantile marine of France at the rate of 10*l.* a ton.

52. As yet only proposals for protecting the trade with the United Kingdom, which two years ago was upwards of forty eight millions sterling a year, and that portion of the foreign trade of our Australian colonies which is moved along the same routes within the limits of the station have been put forward. There now has to be considered how to protect the thirty millions' worth, or more, of the remaining seaborne commerce of the colonies. The principles already indicated hold good in this case. The maritime trade of Australia and New Zealand is liable to attack only on the sea, on the sea it must be defended. The bases having been secured by the sufficient fortification of submarine mines and flanking batteries of relatively simple construction and moderate cost, a large portion of the amount that each province can expend upon its defences would be available for the essential bulwark of floating defences.

54. . . . For keeping the *neighbourhood of the seaports and the enclosed seas* (such *e.g.* as Bass' Straits or the waters inside the Great Barrier Reef) free from an enemy's vessels, craft of the following classes would very likely prove suitable:—

I. *Short voyage Cruizer:*

Displacement, say	1,000 tons.
I.H.P.	1,500.
Armament	{ 1 B.L. gun (about 7 tons.) { 2 " " 40 prs. (say 20 calibres long.) { 6 machine guns.
Speed { (measured mile)	14½ knots.
{ (effective)	12
Complement	110 officers and men.
Cost (perhaps)	55,000 <i>l.</i>

II. *Gunboat, first class:*

Displacement, say	250 tons.
I.H.P.	300.
Armament	{ 3 light B.L. guns. { 4 machine guns.
Speed (measured mile)	12 knots.
" (effective)	10½ "
Complement	43 officers and men.
Cost (perhaps)	12,000 <i>l.</i>

III. *Gunboat, second class:*

Displacement, say	180 tons.
I.H.P.	200.
Armament	{ 1 light B.L. gun. { 4 machine guns.
Speed { (measured mile)	12 knots
{ (effective)	10½ knots.
Complement	33 officers and men
Cost (perhaps)	9,000 <i>l.</i>

IV. *Torpedo steam launches:*

Complement	10 officers and men
Cost (perhaps)	500 <i>l.</i>

N.B.—The figures given are intended merely as explanatory of the kind of craft that would be most likely found useful. They are not meant to be regarded as exact estimates of dimensions, cost, &c. The gun vessels described at p. 547 of Vol. I. of Sir T. Brassey's work, built by Sir W. Armstrong & Co. for China, are of the kind wanted for the "cruisers;" but smaller size and lighter armament would suffice for Australian service.

55. It would in all probability be found unnecessary to build specially all the vessels required, for no doubt suitable craft—to take the place of some at least—would be found among the steamers on the *Colonial Register* of which statistics will be given hereafter.

58. The full complements would only be embarked when the squadron might be placed on a war footing, *mobilised* in fact, or when any particular vessel might be designated to receive a complete crew for periodical training. The permanent *cadres* might as be shown in the following scheme, in which the supplementary numbers in the various ranks to be drawn from local volunteer or reserve organisations are likewise suggested.

[table omitted]

59. It may be suggested that the permanent hands should belong to the Royal Navy, officers and men being lent from that service, for a period in no case permitted to exceed two years, so that they may be kept up to the proper mark in the matter of drills, &c., and being called upon to perform the duties of instructors in addition to the ordinary ship-keeping work. The additional officers and men required when the various vessels might be put upon a war footing, or, in other words, when the naval force might be "mobilised," could be drawn from the local Volunteer or Naval Reserve organisations, or from the seafaring population of each colony not definitely enrolled in these.

60. The Colonial statistics do not in all cases give the maritime population, but the following figures may be useful in estimating the adequacy of the recruiting field likely to prove available for the purpose of completing the peace *cadres*:—In Victoria in 1881 there were 966 men employed in the Steamers, and 1,642 in the Sailing vessels on the register of the Colony. In New South Wales there were added to the register in one year (1881) Steamers employing 115 men, and Sailing vessels employing 228 men, so that the whole number of persons employed afloat by the Colony probably exceeds that of those similarly employed by Victoria. The *results of the census* held in New Zealand in April 1881 show that there were 2,984 Ship-masters, officers, and sailors, and 292 engineers and stokers in the Colony. In 1881 in the vessels, including steamers, belonging to Hobart and Launceston, the two ports of Tasmania, there were 1,376 men and boys.

61. The floating *materiel* of the Colonies, from which it is probable that many vessels suitable for the purposes of war might be selected, is summarised in a table given at page 7 of the Register of Australian and New Zealand Shipping for June 30, 1881.

[table omitted]

62. I have made from the Steamers on the list a selection of those most likely to prove useful for war service, which takes in nearly all the ocean-going vessels of over 900 tons of generally recent construction and good speed. The vessels chosen may not in all cases be desirable craft for the purpose, which could only be ascertained by close personal inspection of each. The list given below may, however, indicate where the most likely craft are to be found. It should be mentioned that, in addition to the vessels whose names are included in it, each Australian port of importance at any given moment is pretty sure to contain several British steamers not on the

Australasian Register, a proportion of which would in all probability be well adapted for employment on some warlike duty.

[table listing details of 23 steamers omitted]

63. It is perhaps almost unnecessary to state that on the colonial registers there are the names of many smaller steamers, some of which might be found adapted for service as gunboats or for torpedo work. In the latter capacity they might add one more to the difficulties any foreign armour-clad would have to encounter where she to undertake the unlikely duty of coming to Australia to attack a seaport.

69. The protection of British commerce afloat within the waters of the station, and of the principal ports and coal depôts in the colonies; has now been as fully dealt with as the principle on which the present submission is based admits of. The object has not been to give an exhaustive answer to the question how to defend the maritime trade and seaports with which this squadron is especially concerned, but rather to point out where information may be looked for that would prove useful in drawing up a perfect scheme of defence. I would respectfully submit that it is not possible for officers serving on board ship, with their hands already very full of work, to draw up such a scheme in an at all satisfactory manner; to do so demands ample time, unchecked power of obtaining information, and an attention not perpetually diverted by the calls of one's proper duty. The magnitude of the interests involved, and the conditions inseparable from the problem of their defence, are such that perhaps it will be not unbecoming in me to suggest that a body of naval officers, say three, be specially charged with the work of visiting the colonial ports and devising a plan for their protection and for that of the immense commerce of which they are the centres. A sudden outbreak of war would find our fellow-countrymen in the colonies not only quite unprepared to defend interests that are vital, but, as far as can be seen, altogether unaware of the true dangers to which the prosperity of Australia and New Zealand is exposed. The officers serving on the station would in case of actual war be far too busy with their own work to do much to help them in arranging for the security of their enormous trade.

92. Should the suggestions contained in this letter not be thought worthy of adoption. I still hope that a little useful information may be found in it amongst the statistics, collected with some labour. My ordinary duties have not left me much leisure for other work. I regret the length to which this letter has run. Had I had more time at my disposal I would have made it shorter.

I have, &c,

CYPRIAN A. G. BRIDGE
Captain.

Report by F.T. Sargood, 28 May 1883, enclosed in Australia letter No. 225 of 1883, from Commodore James Erskine to the Admiralty
- PRO: ADM 116/68, f.20.

DEFENCE RE-ORGANIZATION SCHEME

NAVAL DEFENCES

The Honourable the Treasurer.

Sir,

In continuation of the general scheme for the Defence of the Colony I now beg to hand you the portion relating to the Naval branch.

1. The Naval branch of the Victorian Defences consists at present of the *Cerberus* and *Nelson*.

2. There are now building, to arrive during this or early next year—

1 gunboat (12-knot speed), carrying one 10-in., two 13-pounder breech-loading guns and two Nordenfeldt machine guns.

1 gunboat (10-knot speed), carrying one 8-in., one 6-in., and two 9-pounder breech-loading guns, and two Nordenfeldt machine guns.

2 torpedo-boats, 63ft. long.

1 torpedo-boat, 113ft. long.

1 guard-boat for the *Cerberus*.

3. In addition six broadside 6-in. B.L. guns are shortly expected.

4. A 12-knot steamer has also been ordered for the Ports and Harbour Department, and at my suggestion the Honourable the Commissioner of Trade and Customs has decided upon sending Home instructions to have her strengthened so as to carry a heavy gun forward, thus making her in time of war a powerful gun-boat.

5. The *Nelson* must however, be ignored in any practical scheme of Defence, being deemed by His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir Wm. Jervois, Commodore Wilson, and Major-General Scratchley, as obsolete and unfitted for use against ships armed with modern guns. This is also the opinion (as expressed to me) of Admiral Sir Cooper Keys, Admiral Herbert, and Capt. Hopkins; in fact, she would have but a poor chance against either of the new gun-boats.

6. Neither is it desirable to retain her as a hulk for drill or store purposes; as the annual cost of keeping her in order is very considerable.

7. The recent introduction of steel-faced plates has so materially reduced the weight of armour on a ship as to enable a much larger supply of coal to be carried,

and consequently the probabilities are that we should have to meet attacks from armoured war-ships.

8. In addition, it is certain that, on the outbreak of war, attempts would be made to harass our commercial marine by means of swift steamers, armed with one or more powerful guns.

9. To meet these two contingencies, it is proposed in time of peace to provide with such a complement of officers and men as, with the addition of the Naval Militia, would in time of war fully man—

The *Cerberus*,
Two gun-boats,
Three torpedo-boats,
One Harbour Department boat, armed with one of the 6-inch B.L. Guns.

Two Harbour Trust boats, to be strengthened and each armed with one of the 6-inch B.L. guns.

One guard-boat for *Cerberus*

Four Armed Cruisers, to be obtained by arranging with the owners of suitable local or intercolonial steamers to have them strengthened so as to carry one heavy gun. Three of the 6-inch breech-loading guns and the one 7-inch muzzle-loading gun now on board the *Nelson* to be used for this purpose.

Having consulted confidentially the Chairman of the Harbour Trust, he authorizes me to state that the Commissioners are prepared to do all in their power to facilitate the proposed scheme, and leave the Government to communicate with the Agent-General relative to the strengthening of the two steamers now building at Home.

10. These eight guns in time of peace to be kept on shore for drill purposes. In such places as would facilitate their being put on board the steamers when required.

11. That the Lords of the Admiralty view with favour the proposed plan of providing cruisers is clear from the following extract from a letter addressed by them to the Royal Commission On the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce abroad:—

“If the Colonies are in a position to secure fast sea-going steamers, a body of Naval Reserve seamen ready to man them, and the means of fitting them with their armament, My Lords would be prepared to supply suitable guns, ammunition, and magazine fittings.”

15. The hulls, engines, and armament of the *Cerberus*, Gun, and Torpedo boats being liable to serious and rapid deterioration, the only true economy will be to maintain a staff sufficient to keep everything in perfect order and repair.

16. The Naval branch Should therefore contain—

- (a) A small number of permanent officers, engineers, warrant officers, stokers, and seamen.
- (b) A sufficient number of skilled engineers and stokers in the Militia, who, being carefully instructed both on shore and afloat, would obtain a complete knowledge of the machinery by which the employees at the Williamstown workshops, at time of engagement, would bind themselves to become and remain members of the Militia if called upon to do so.

17. The Naval Militia should be under the control of the Permanent Staff for purposes of instruction, and every officer and man should be told off to his respective vessel, so that knowing their allotted places and duties all would become proficient in their special work.

20. Four times a year, or oftener if found practicable, all the vessels should get up steam be fully manned, and be put through a course of drill and manoeuvres by the Commander.

21. My report upon the Land Defences called special attention to the officering of that force, and both your predecessor and yourself have decided upon securing the services of a few Imperial officers, to be "seconded" for terms of five years and then changed.

22. Important as this point is for the Military branch, it is of even greater moment to the Naval, and the following extracts indicate the opinions held by naval authorities of high standing on the subject:—

Commodore A. H. HOSKINS, 16th November 1876.

"If the increase of the Naval Force is decided on, I should recommend the appointment of a captain of the Royal Navy for the chief command, with a staff of, say, two lieutenants, two gunners, one or more torpedo engineers, and a sufficient number of gunnery and torpedo instructors. The commanding officer might be on the same footing as the officer who formerly commanded the Bombay Marine, and be replaced with his staff at stated intervals, by which means the introduction of new ideas and the results of further experience would be ensured.

Many captains newly promoted would, I imagine, be glad of such employment during the time they would otherwise be kept on enforced half-pay."

Commodore A. H. HOSKINS, 21st March, 1877.

"It is evident to me that the only course for the Victorian Government to pursue, in order to put them (the *Cerberus* and Naval Forces of Victoria) in a really satisfactory state, is to obtain the services of a competent officer from England, who will be able to work out all the details of re-organization and equipment under the Minister responsible for the naval administration."

Captain S. P. TOWNSEND, 3rd July, 1877.

"It is desirable that the appointment of thoroughly competent officers, on the system as proposed by Commodore Hoskins, in his report of 16th November, 1876, be carried

out. The periodical change would ensure having officers intimately acquainted with all the newest improvements and systems."

Commodore WILSON. 25th March, 1880.

(Special Reports made to His Excellency the Marquis of Normanby, upon the Marine Defences of Victoria.)

"No small standing Naval Force can ever be really satisfactory; it must, to exist, be ever improving, or otherwise it surely retrogrades. Without the stimulus of competition, constant introduction of new blood and fresh thought, the retrogression begins from its inauguration, and however well ships may look, or their crews be drilled, it is as certain as possible that such a navy is a delusion, a whitened sepulchre, without *esprit de corps, tradition, or vitality.*

The question of officers and instructors is by far the most important, for it is through them that that vitality, which I hold is wanting in any standing Colonial Force, must be conveyed. These, therefore, should be drawn triennially from the Royal Service, and no amount of interest or worth should lead to any exception being made in the time allotted."

Commodore WILSON 7th June, 1881.

(Examination before Royal Commission on Defences at Sydney.)

"The Naval Force should be instructed by a staff of officers and seamen-gunners drawn from the Royal Service, to be changed at the expiration of three years, so as to ensure thorough efficiency in both officers and instructors.

I have sketched out what appeared to me a suitable and sufficient Naval Force, both in materiel and personnel, and I now come to that which is to inspire the whole, and give to the service that vitality and stimulus so imperatively necessary to any high standard of excellence, but which from the lack of tradition, or competition, I hold to be wanting in small local services, resulting too often in mere outward show and parade. It is through the system of instruction and supervision that I propose to introduce this wanting leaven. Royal Naval officers and seamen-gunners must be drawn from home. Each colony to have a gunnery lieutenant or commander at the head of its Naval establishment, *according to the size of the corps. The entire instructing staff to be rigidly changed every three years.* I place importance on this point for instructing is, in itself, such a strain on the mind that change is necessary; but besides it is advisable to ensure that all improvements in drill and arms used afloat are properly taught."

(Letter from the Admiralty, 11th Nov., 1882.)

"My Lords are of opinion that progress in the practice and science of gunnery is now so rapid, it is necessary that every officer and man should take advantage of frequent opportunities to replenish and advance his knowledge."

Admiral Sir C. Keys, Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, Admiral Herbert, and Captain Hopkins, also stated to me most distinctly that this plan of officering is the only one by which any Colonial Naval Force can be kept in a state of efficiency.

23. Officers and warrant officers, such as we require, can be obtained from the Imperial Navy; and I strongly recommend that arrangements be made with the Admiralty to lend us from the "Active List", for terms of five years—

- 1 Junior Captain, as Senior Naval Officer,
- 1 Lieutenant, to act as Second Lieutenant and Torpedo Instructor,
- 6 Gunners; or Gunners' Mates,

who shall hold the appointments, say, for five years, and then be replaced by others who have recently passed through the *Vernon* and *Excellent*, and be otherwise eligible. These with Lieutenant Collins, who has proceeded to England to requalify, will provide a sufficient staff for the requirements of the Service.

24. The Imperial Government should also be requested to instruct the Senior Officer on the Australian station to inspect and report upon our Naval Forces from time to time.

33. The absolute necessity for the Commanding Officer of any force being senior to all under his command is self-evident; and yet, as the Royal Naval Officer to be "lent" to us will, in all probability be a Junior Captain, it follows that, under present arrangements, the Captain of the Naval Reserve, although under his command, will be his senior in rank.

34. Or, even assuming, this difficulty to be overcome, by giving the Royal Naval Officer increased "local rank", the serious fact remains that in the absence, temporary or otherwise, of such officer, the command of the whole naval strength would devolve upon the Captain of the Naval Reserve, as being the next in seniority.

35. Bearing in mind that the First Lieutenant of the *Cerberus* is, and will be, an officer of the Royal Navy, educated for and devoting his whole time to his profession, it follows, as a matter of course, that he should be more competent to take command than the senior officer of the Naval Reserve, who, consequent upon his civil engagements, can give but partial attention to naval matters.

36. I therefore propose that in future (in accordance with the practice of the Admiralty, both as to the Naval Reserve and Naval Volunteer Artillery) the senior officer of the Naval Militia shall not hold higher rank than that of Lieutenant, and that such Lieutenant, if senior to the First Lieutenant, R.N., shall not, by reason of such seniority, be entitled to but may be given the command of the Naval Forces.

37. The attention of the Honourable the Commissioner of Public Works should be drawn to the necessity of making early provision for a Marine yard, where all repairs could be executed, and naval stores ammunition, &c., kept.

38. In this yard there should be a slip with transporting cradles for hauling up under cover and launching from time to time the Gun and Torpedo boats, as the latter must never be allowed to remain long in the water, while of the two Gun-boats it may be possible to arrange to keep only one afloat at a time.

42. At present the rate of pay of the Naval Reserve is as follows:—

Captain Commanding	£80
Lieutenants	£50
Surgeons	£30
Gunners	£20
1st Class Petty Officers	£16
2nd " "	£14
AB's	£12
Gunner (paid staff)	10s. per diem
Drill Instructor	8s. 6d. "

in return for which all ranks are required to do 144 hours' duty per annum.

43. The duties and time required from the Naval Reserve will not in any material degree differ from those demanded of the Military Forces, while the rates of civil salary and wages earned by officers and men are practically the same in both branches of the service.

46. It being imperative that the Naval Militia should not be allowed to stagnate by its members (including the instructors) being permitted to remain too long in the force, it is proposed—

- (a) That the instructors be changed every five years.
- (b) That men should be sworn in for five years.

Officers and Warrant and Petty Officers to retire at the same ages and times as the corresponding rank in the land militia.

49. The Report of Commodore Wilson to His Excellency the Marquis of Normanby, dated 25th March, 1880, upon the Marine Defences of the Colony contains so many valuable suggestions, and so thoroughly endorses the scheme recommended by me, as to warrant my making the following somewhat full extracts:—

Commodore WILSON 25th March, 1880.

"I now come to the class of vessels which, I think, the colony should be prepared to meet, and which might, if well commanded, do immeasurable damage both to its shipping and to its numerous exposed sea-ports, that is the armed merchant vessel possessing great speed and coal vitality. Such ships could more easily evade the watchful eye of our cruisers and Consuls abroad, and from their coal capacity be fitted out at remote ports, and pass unobserved, disguised as traders, over half the world.

We must now consider the style of vessels best adapted for defensive purposes, their number and armament. These vessels may be divided into two divisions, one to operate outside the heads, the other inside Port Phillip. The outside squadron should consist of armed merchant vessels, manned by the Naval Reserve, but under properly skilled officers. The inside squadron should consist of heavily armed gun-boats and torpedo-launches. A glance at the chart of Port Phillip will show how well adapted it is for defence by gun-boats; the broad expanse of shoals running across the entrance gives such vessels a command over others of deeper draught, which should not be overlooked. Manoeuvring on the banks, they would be safe from capture, and if sunk, could easily be

recovered, and I doubt the possibility of an unarmoured ship being able to run the gauntlet of six such vessels well placed along the route she must follow. As a rule, ordinary merchant vessels are not strong enough to carry heavy guns, and, therefore, if the idea shadowed forth in this paper be adopted, it would be advisable for the Government to stipulate with local companies to build their ships of the necessary strength and with water-tight compartments. The premium for throwing in the extra strength would not be large, and I believe the Home Government are paying it to several firms at the present time.

Four such armed merchant ships acting in concert with the Royal Navy and local marine defences of the neighbouring colonies ought to be ample to protect trade entering or leaving Port Phillip, and give an account of any enemies' cruisers venturing to intercept it.

The gun-boats I would recommend are what are known in the navy as the 'Staunch' class of gun-boat. They are of 180 tons and 25 horse-power; and carry one 18-ton gun, which can be lowered into a well in bad weather, and as easily raised by steam power. These little vessels steam about 8 knots, and only draw a few feet of water, and as they can easily be hauled up on slips and kept under cover out of the water, they will last for half a century.

In conclusion, I am aware that there are many important considerations relating to the question of Colonial Defence, on which I have not touched. I have confined myself to what is necessary to the Naval Defence of the colony of Victoria, or more particularly to Melbourne; but it will be obvious to all that any such scheme must be part of a whole, and that no defence, or system of defence, can be either economical or perfect without confederation amongst the Australian colonies. Victoria may have to be defended off King George's Sound, or even off Sydney; but to do so there must both harmony and united action amongst the defensive navies of the colonies.

Again, the colonial Naval Defences must act in concert with that of the mother country, therefore as a matter of good policy, all the local navies should be under the Royal Naval Officer commanding the Australian station (in so far as discipline and inspection are concerned)."

I append a Schedule of the proposed strength, together with the annual cost of the scheme.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

F.T. SARGOOD,

Major, R.V.A.

Melbourne, 28th May, 1883.

(5)

APPENDIX to Report by F.T. Sargood, enclosed in Australia letter No. 225 of
1883, from Commodore James Erskine to the Admiralty
- PRO: ADM 116/68, f.20.

With reference to clause 24 I would mention that since the printing of the accompanying report the following circulars have been received from Lord Derby and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty:—

ADMIRALTY TO COLONIAL OFFICE.

Sir,

Admiralty, 6th December, 1882.

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty desire me to request that you will state to the Earl of Kimberley that they have had under their consideration the desirability of developing and increasing the efficiency of such Naval or Coast Defence Forces as may have been established in Her Majesty's Colonies for the protection of the Ports, Commerce, or Coasts of those Colonies.

2. With this object they would invite the concurrence of His Lordship, in giving directions to the Commanders-in-Chief or Officers Commanding on the following Stations, within which Her Majesty's Colonies are chiefly situated, viz:—

North America and West Indies,
Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa,
Australia,
East Indies,
China,

to take opportunities, not oftener than once a year, of inspecting and reporting as to the efficiency of any such Colonial, Naval, or Coast Defence Forces that exist within the limits of their respective stations, and in further directing them after such inspection—

- (a) To transmit a copy of the regulations which have been established for the organisation, drill and maintenance of the Force, specifying any changes in the regulations introduced since the last inspection.
- (b) To express their several opinions as to the efficiency of the Forces.
- (c) To state to what particular service the Forces could be applied in time of war, specifying whether they are purely local or for general service.
- (d) To add any recommendation they consider desirable to increase the efficiency of such Forces, having regard to the resources of the Colonies to which they belong, and the special local requirements and hydrographical features of the ports in these Colonies.

3. Should His Lordship concur in these proposals, My Lords would suggest that instructions should be given to the various Governors of Her Majesty's Colonies to co-operate with the several Naval Commanders-in-Chief in carrying out these measures.

I am, &c.

(Signed) G. TRYON

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

Circular (2).

Downing Street, 18th April, 1883.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of a letter from the Admiralty, 6th December 1882, stating that the Lords Commissioners have had under their consideration the desirability of developing and increasing the efficiency of such Naval or Coast Defence Forces as may have been established in Her Majesty's Colonies for the protection of the Ports, Commerce, or Coasts of these Colonies, and, with that object in view suggesting the co-operation of Governors of Colonies with the several Naval Commanders-in-Chief in obtaining information of the nature indicated in their letter.

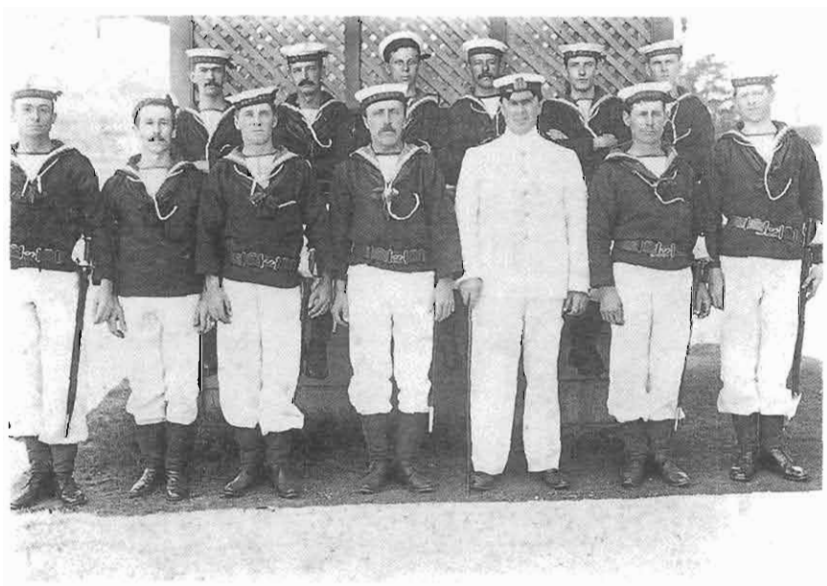
It will no doubt be an advantage to a Colony to receive, from time to time, an independent report on its defensive arrangements; and if your Ministers concur in the suggestions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty I shall be glad to be informed that you are prepared to co-operate with the Naval Officer in command in carrying out the wishes of the Admiralty in this matter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

DERBY.

The Officer Administering
the Government of
[original blank]



NSW Naval Artillery Volunteers, 1890. (AWM P02233.008)

(6)

Memorandum by Admiral Sir Astley Cooper Key, 28 October 1884
- PRO: ADM 116/68, f.146-147.

Naval Defence of our Colonies.

Many of the Colonial Governments, notably those of the Australasian Colonies, are now thoroughly aware of the necessity for providing for the protection of their ports against attack, in the event of Great Britain being involved in war. They naturally consider that the most effective mode of supplementing the support which will be afforded by the ships of the Royal Navy cruising and stationed in Colonial waters will be by the organization of small squadrons at each port for local harbour defence.

This organization has already been commenced with much spirit and patriotism in some of the Australian Colonies. They have, however, great difficulties to contend with in providing officers and crews for their vessels, especially as the management of torpedoes and submarine mines will form part of the necessary training of both officers and men.

Another difficulty must necessarily arise as regards the maintenance of discipline. The crews will not be subject to the provisions of the Naval Discipline Act unless the services of the vessels have been especially accepted by the Admiralty, and have been placed under the command of the Admiral or Senior Officer on the station.

In such cases, the relative rank of the officers—some of whom will be borne on the active list of the Navy some on the retired list, and others probably entered from the merchant service—will cause much confusion.

They must in time of war be guided by the Admiralty Instructions for the government of the Royal Navy, and must use the Naval Signal books, of which many of them would have no knowledge or experience, and this knowledge can be obtained only by many years' practice.

The maintenance of the vessels in a state of efficiency, and the constant exercise of officers and men, without which both ships and crews would rapidly deteriorate, would necessarily depend on the views of the Colonial Government for the time being: while the superior officers and instructors would be debarred from advancing their professional knowledge, and from becoming acquainted with the frequent changes in naval equipments, unless they returned to England for those objects at stated intervals.

I consider that it is both our duty and our interest to assist the Colonies in the defence of their ports and their commerce to the utmost of our power.

I proceed, therefore, to offer suggestions which will have the effect of removing many of the difficulties with which the present system is surrounded.

I propose that the number and description of vessels required for the local harbour defence of each Colony should be carefully considered locally, in each communication with the Admiral commanding the Station.

If the Colonial Government is willing to furnish the funds necessary for the provision and maintenance of the naval force considered to be requisite for the protection of its port or ports, the Imperial Government should agree to superintend the construction and maintenance of the vessels as Imperial ships of war, in all

respects as part of the Royal Navy. The wages and allowances for the officers and men, including the prospective cost for pensions for the men, and the other working expenses of the vessels, will be borne by the Colony as an annual charge.

Such vessels would be especially appropriated to the defence of the port to which they belong, but would be directly under the orders of the Commander-in-chief to perform any services for which they were suitable, and would thus, both during peace or war, be a valuable supplement to the squadron on the station.

This arrangement would be practicable and useful, even if it were limited to one or more Colonies only; but if the whole of a group, such as the important group of the Australasian Colonies, were to agree to adopt such a system, it is needless to point out what a formidable naval force would be provided by such a combination, amply sufficient for defence against any attack that would probably be attempted so far from the resources of a foreign Power.

It is evident that no system of local naval defence which any Colony could provide would be so efficient and reliable at the same cost as that now proposed; all the difficulties which have been shown to exist in the maintenance of a purely Colonial force would vanish: officers and men would be thoroughly trained, and would be well acquainted with the ports and coasts they have to guard, while the vessels would be maintained in efficiency and always ready for service.

As no expense would be caused to Admiralty funds, the junior officers and seamen thus serving might be an addition to those annually voted for the Navy, and might doubtless be supplemented by seamen volunteers in the Colonies.

It is of much importance that this proposal, if approved by Her Majesty's Government, should be brought to the notice of the Governments of the Colonies (especially those in Australia) as soon as possible, and it appears desirable to give directions to Rear-Admiral George Tryon, who will shortly leave England to take command of the naval forces in Australia, to communicate with the various Colonial Governments, and endeavour to obtain their concurrence in the adoption of this system, which will include a statement of the small vessels necessary at each port, and the provision of the necessary funds. They will not be slow to realize the feeling of security which would result from such a combination for defensive purposes, while we may be satisfied that such a step would tend to unite the Colonies to the mother-country by bonds of friendship and mutual reliance.

A. COOPER KEY.

(7)
Memorandum by Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon, 28 November 1884
- PRO: ADM 116/68, f.157.

With Reference to Colonial Vessels of War.

It is possible one or more of the Australian Colonies may make proposals which embrace, amongst others, the following points:—

1. The undermentioned arrangements to hold good for ten years at least.
2. The Ships of War will at the request of the Colony be furnished by the Admiralty, i.e., they will be built and equipped under the responsibility of the admiralty.
3. The type of ship and the design, and the estimate to be approved by the Government of the Colony and by the Admiralty.
4. The armament to be approved by the Government of the Colony.
5. All repairs so far as they can be effected to be executed within the Colony.
6. Repairs to be effected in the same manner and under and with the same authority as is the practice with H.M. Ships.
7. The cost of 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to be borne by the Colony.
8. The Ships to be officered and manned by the Admiralty.
9. Officers and men to enjoy precisely the same personal advantages as to rank, time, service, and promotion, as though they were serving in one of H.M. Ships in commission.
10. The entire cost of the *personnel* to be borne by the Colony. This will include the actual wages and the ultimate liability on account of pension for the period served in the Colony.
11. The mode of payment and repayment to be settled.
12. The vessels to be under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Station.
13. A Senior Officer for each Colony will be indicated who will be the authority to whom all communications will be addressed by the Governor of the Colony in the absence of the Commander in Chief.
14. The vessels will not be sent beyond the waters of the Colony to which they belong, save with the assent, or at the instance of the Governor of the Colony, and with the consent of the Senior Naval Officer.
15. In time of war all the vessels will be placed under the orders of the Commander in Chief on the Station, and they will then be on precisely the same footing as H.M. vessels employed within the Australian Waters, but will not be moved outside the waters of Australasia without the sanction of the Government of the Colonies.

16. The Commander in Chief in such a case will have due regard to the purposes for which they were built.
17. During a time of peace one of the first duties of the Officers and crews of such vessels will be to instruct the Reserve Forces and Volunteers to the full extent that the means at their disposal admit.
18. All such vessels to fly the white ensign and pendant. The crews to be subject to precisely the same discipline as that in force in H.M. Navy.
19. Nothing in the above Regulations will prevent any Colony possessing itself of other vessels for other purposes. In such case those vessels will fly the Colonial Flag. This will apply to all Yachts, Tenders, and auxiliary vessels, but may be placed by the Governor of the Colony under the orders of the senior Naval Officer.

SUMMARY.

The Admiralty to supply, man, and maintain the ships. The colony to defray the expenses.

The arrangement to last for at least ten years, but is only to terminate on 3 years' notice.

(Signed) G. Tryon.

5, Eaton Place, S.W.

28 November, 1884.

(8)

Memorandum by Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon - PRO: ADM 116/68, f.457.

[Enclosure in Rear Admiral Tryon's letter to Sir Henry Loch the Governor of Victoria, 27 March, 1885.]

MEMORANDUM.

CONSIDERATIONS of defence naturally involve an estimate of what they are to be prepared against.

History is apt to repeat itself; squadrons and fleets have escaped the most vigilant Admirals, and the most skilful strategists failed in days of old so to order our fleets as to prevent this. Since those days; the composition of the navies of the world has greatly altered, and at this time it is far easier for an Admiral to avoid notice and conceal destination.

It is possible that an attack may be delivered by a small squadron of ironclads of a type that does not entitle them to a place in the first rank—they would be very formidable if employed to attack our Colonies; and still more possibly a hostile squadron might contain vessels of the fast partially-armoured class that are now much in fashion, and the construction of them is on the increase. It is well to consider what such a squadron could do, supposing it had arrived off our coast, having avoided detection, the Admiral in command, deceived by false reports, gone to New Zealand, with the telegraphs cut.

If there is a determination to resist such a squadron, even should it force a channel or the line of defence, unless it is accompanied by a considerable land force, cannot do much against a large population, if there is a resolute determination to resist at all costs.

It could also effect a certain amount of harm by bombardment, but to such towns as Melbourne and Sydney the injury would not be very great, even if the fleet expended all its ammunition. The more lasting effect would be the destruction of trade, and with it the recuperative power of the country, for years. If in lieu of resistance there was hesitation, followed by a decision to yield—a condition I hardly can contemplate—trade and commerce will be equally destroyed, and if there is one thing more certain than another it is, that demands, if yielded to, would have a more disastrous effect on the welfare of the country than ever could be produced by the heaviest bombardment.

History is replete with instances of the successful resistance that can be improvised by large towns against even a very considerable force.

The destruction of trade and commerce, and with it, the infliction of long and lasting injury, could be also effected by an enemy who sent fast cruisers such as could prey upon us. We must therefore provide the means whereby they may be captured, if possible; if not, at all events, driven off our own coasts.

It seems to me that if our local defences are in a satisfactory condition a heavy squadron would have no mission in these waters. The cost would be great, the maintenance difficult, and in time it would be overtaken.

From the above it appears that two forces are required, each with its special mission, but each aiding the other. The duty of the first is to defy attack, and to welcome the coming friend, and to afford him a safe harbour; the latter to chase and

capture the enemy on the wide sea, or, if driven home by superior force, to join in the defence. It appears to me that the local defence forces—I include in this term the naval and military force, the forts, mines and torpedoes, in fact everything—at Melbourne are designed to comply with one condition viz., to furnish local defence.

Each harbour has special conditions attached to it. Some may be defended by forts and mines only; in some cases torpedo boats must be added, and in other cases, such as occur at Port Phillip, where there is a wide entrance to an inland sea, a defence is created by covering the entrance with gun fire, the channels by mines; the forts and mines aided by a flotilla and by torpedo boats, so that if a vessel should perchance burst through all, and, though shattered, still be able to punish an undefended town, she would be tackled by a naval force.

Although it probably will not be questioned that a regular trained force is a more perfect force in itself than any militia or volunteer force, still there is a reasoning to which weight must be attached in favour of leaving by far the greater portion of local defence in the hands of local corps.

Local corps can be formed on a system which withdraws those who join them but little from those occupations which increase the wealth of the country. Local corps are subject to the keenest local criticism—to a criticism that is perfectly well understood by them, but which would probably ruin a more regular force. The system of local corps tends to identify the population with the defence. It is less likely to languish. It gives experience to many in the supply and in the use of warlike stores. It does not continuously separate the men from their wives and families. It habituates the people to feel that possibly some day they may be required to make personal sacrifices. It gives a sense of security. It tends to allay panic. It accustoms the Government of the country to study the questions involved, and the responsibility that belongs to it on this subject is kept perpetually before their eyes.

Under such a system more men are trained to arms than under a system based on a permanent long-service force.

The essential to do justice to local corps is a nucleus of trained men and experts.

But if we are to have efficient vessels to capture cruisers they must have thoroughly efficient crews, trained and inured to the sea, and well practised in their vessels. This is a totally different thing to the other.

To keep the crews of such ships efficient, they must be changed from time to time. There are no means of drafting them from ship to ship out here at this time, or of sending them to undergo a course of training in the new methods, or new implements of war, or to keep them acquainted with what they have to meet.

I see no way, in 1885, of securing efficiency save by making such vessels *bonâ fide* men-of-war, on the same footing in every respect as all Her Majesty's ships in commission.

I do not understand that your Excellency desires me to draw up a scheme for consideration that does not also pay some regard to the financial aspect of the case, but rather to formulate a scheme which, if adopted, would in my opinion give a substantial addition to our Naval Forces in these waters, and be specially suited for the service required of them.

If the reasoning contained in what I have written is accepted as right, and assuming that the local defence is satisfactory, it follows that what are wanted in the first place are cruiser catchers.

In Parliament, in London, lately, it was announced that ten additional vessels of what are termed "Scout" class should be added to the navy; these vessels admirably adapted for the service for which they are designed, would in my opinion, not have sufficient gun power, but a design might be got out giving them 6-inch breech-loading guns, in lieu of 5-inch; these guns at moderate ranges penetrate ordinary iron-clads.

The legend of the ship should run thus:—

16½ knots: 1,600 miles full speed; 7,000 miles half speed, 10 knots: six 6-in. B.L. Guns on sponsons as in "Scout" class.

This enables two guns to be fired ahead, two astern, or three on either broadside, with shields to protect the crews against machine guns.

A light hog-back forecastle and poop. This seems to be advantageous, as the seas that run at the entrances of these harbours are often heavy and the "Rip" inconvenient, besides they would give cover for machine guns, of which there should be an ample supply; also two electric lights, four fixed torpedo tubes each side. Quite a light rig, with fore-and-aft sails—in fact, as a whole, a "Scout" enlarged to carry the guns named.

Six such vessels would be a substantial and material additional protection to our trade and commerce; and, besides being cruiser catchers, are well adapted to join in the defence of any port; moreover, even if far more powerful vessels appeared in these waters, they would have their mission, which would not be confined to defensive operations. They would be a most welcome addition to Her Majesty's squadron that is usually employed on this station.

I may here point out that, if all the Colonies concurred in any arrangement for their protection, economy and efficiency would be greatly increased. For instance, if, instead of each Colony ordering its own vessels, or each Colony ordering guns or rifles, without concert, an agreement could be come to on such subjects, stores would be interchangeable, and in time of need one would be able to aid the other. If there is no agreement on such points, after action, or refitting, we should have to send to each Colony for stores belonging to her ships.

It must be remembered that these Colonies cannot be attacked simultaneously, though they might be consecutively if the enemy was successful in his first efforts.

Should it be decided by the Colonies to move on the following lines, viz.—to create a force suited to these waters and to the special requirements of their case, with the view to increase the Australian squadron—to bring the matter within range of decision, I put forward a series of propositions on my own responsibility, but with an earnest feeling that some such force is much required; and while I personally recommend for consideration each proposition, I quite recognize that it is necessary to convince those responsible for recommending expenditure as well as the colonists at large, and it is not possible within the limits of such a paper as this to enter fully into all details involved. It may be recalled that in the reign of Henry IV. the country was much perplexed about the navy, then in its infancy. Matters had not gone well with it either as to expenditure or as to the force produced. It was decided to entrust it to merchants, viz., to provide a navy by contract. The system did not last long, for reasons I need not enter into, but the precedent conveys an idea.

Should it be decided that the highest interests would be best served if the Colonies defrayed the expense while the Admiralty supplied men and maintained the vessels, it being clearly understood that the vessels so provided were to be a force, both as to *personnel* and *matériel*, additional to the fleet of the Empire as voted by

the Parliament in London, then the following are some of the points that would present themselves for decision:—

(i.) The arrangement to last, say, for ten years, but to terminate only after three years' notice.

(ii.) The Admiralty to furnish the ships, which would be built either by contract or in the dockyards. The ships to be equipped, manned, and despatched as are all other of Her Majesty's ships, the sole reserve being a limitation as to their employment.

(iii.) The class of ship, the design, and estimate to be approved by the Colonial Government and by the Admiralty.

(iv.) The armaments to be approved by the Colonial Government.

(v.) Repairs to be effected, as far as they can be, within the Colony.

(vi.) Repairs to be effected in the same manner and with the same authority as is the practice with Her Majesty's ships.

(vii.) The Admiralty to re-commission the ships from time to time, precisely as Her Majesty's ships on the station.

(viii.) The officers and men to be on the same footing in every respect as the officers and men in Her Majesty's ships. In fact, the ships to be in every sense Her Majesty's ships in commission, and placed under the Commander-in-Chief on the Australian station.

(ix.) At no time will these vessels be removed without the waters of Australasia without the sanction of the Governments of the Colonies.

(x.) During a time of peace, the officers and others of such ships as are not in active commission could be well employed to instruct the Reserve Forces and Volunteers. A special arrangement on this subject would be necessary.

(xi.) Nothing in the above regulations prevents a Colony possessing itself of other vessels for other purposes. Such vessels will fly, as now, the Colonial Flag, and this applies to all vessels the property of Colonial Governments when they are not placed under the Naval Commander-in-Chief. When under the Commander-in-Chief they would fly the White Ensign, and be like other ships of the squadron.

(xii) The entire cost of *materiel*, of *maintenance*, and of *personnel*, including the ultimate liability of Her Majesty's Government on account of deferred pay for officers and men for the periods they serve in such ships to be borne by the Colony.

That there is a distinct call for every endeavour that can tend to protect our commerce cannot be questioned. More sea-going tonnage enters one port within these Colonies annually than entered the Thames at the time when Her Majesty came to the throne within the same period.

There is no Colony that does not possess statistics that clearly demonstrate how small a percentage would be called for out of the profits of that trade to afford a reasonable amount of protection; and a first step in this direction would be taken if we provided ourselves with cruiser catchers, and to the cruisers I should desire to add torpedo boats capable of going from port to port. They would be especially valuable

to cover a long stretch of one coast. The possession of such boats, kept always at the end of a telegraph wire, would effectually prevent an enemy anchoring near our shores.

I recommend the adoption of a dropping arrangement, which could be fitted in a few hours to local small steam-boats, such as we have on board H.M.S. "Nelson" for Whitehead torpedoes. It is inexpensive in construction and maintenance, and enables us to largely supplement more regular torpedo boats for harbour defence, in a ready and effectual way. There should be torpedo stations on shore, a small pier where the boats could rest in safety, and two air-compressing engines in different positions within the Heads, and two skilled hands at each station.

I have dwelt specially on the defence of our principal ports (I have previously written on the defence of Newcastle and Sydney), because I feel that, if the principal temptations to attack are removed, and the largest prizes are shielded, it would not be worth while for an enemy to detach important squadrons for the purpose of destroying less important places; and thus the whole of the Colonies and every place would receive benefit, insomuch as they would not be liable to be devastated by an overwhelming force.

Cruisers and unarmoured ships can do little against a comparatively very small defence; and it will be noticed that, while I have recommended the adoption of cruiser catchers, I have not been unmindful of the long stretches of these shores where the efforts of the enemy would be best defeated by another class of boat.

It may not be out of place here to mention, seeing that success engenders success, that, if all united to pay the losses suffered at any spot on our shores owing to the resistance the inhabitants made, either to the demands of any enemy or to actual attack, it could not do otherwise than provoke that unity of action and of feeling that goes so far as to assure success.

I am aware that this report may be held not to go so far as is contemplated in Your Excellency's letter to which it is a reply; but I need hardly do more than mention to Your Excellency that a navy cannot be created in a day, and that is hardly the time to consider what force would be sufficient to give security against this or that force; that a great deal can be done if all pull together to meet present emergency; and the foundation of a force might well be laid that would grow with the growth of our Colonies.

Proposed---

SEA-GOING COLONIAL FLEET

If all joined, including New Zealand.

Six Cruiser Catchers.

Eight torpedo boats, sea-going, say of 150 tons.

The above to be furnished, manned, and maintained by the Admiralty at the cost of the Colonies. (A portion of this force only to remain in commission during a time of peace.)

LOCAL DEFENCES

To be officered and manned by Local Forces:

viz., Harbour Defence Vessels, and Whitehead Torpedo Boats,
small class generally speaking.

Batteries and Mines to be entrusted to Local Corps.

That Local Corps should have a good nucleus of highly-trained men is an essential condition.

The Whitehead system to enter largely into the system of defence, and dropping gear to be provided in readiness to be fitted to local boats to supplement the regular torpedo boats.



*A machine gun battery in action on the flying deck of HMVS Cerberus in 1895
(AWM P0952/03/03)*

ADMIRALTY,
9th September, 1885

**Local Defence and Protection of Floating Trade in the Waters of the
AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.**

In order to deal with this very important question practically, and in a really efficient manner, it appears to my Lords that the question must be divided into two parts, and each part dealt with separately. The first part being to provide local defence for the principal harbours in each of the Colonies: the second part being to provide efficient protection to the large floating trade in Australasian waters.

The first part—viz., Local Defence for the principal Harbours in each of the Colonies—my Lords consider should be purely a Colonial question: the harbours to be defended, and the most suitable means of providing thoroughly efficient *materiel* and *personnel* for such protection in each of the Colonies to be dealt with by that Colony. The defences would consist of torpedo boats, submarine mines protected by light guns, and such fortifications as may be considered to be necessary. The whole of the force required for these defences to be Volunteers raised in the Colony, and the whole of the expenses in connection with the local defence of each Colony to be paid for entirely by that Colony, and to be solely under its control.

Secondly—To provide efficient Protection to the large Floating Trade in Australasian Waters. This being for the benefit of the whole of the Colonies, it appears that the necessary expenses should be borne by each of the Colonies, in proportion to its population.

The points for consideration in this matter are—

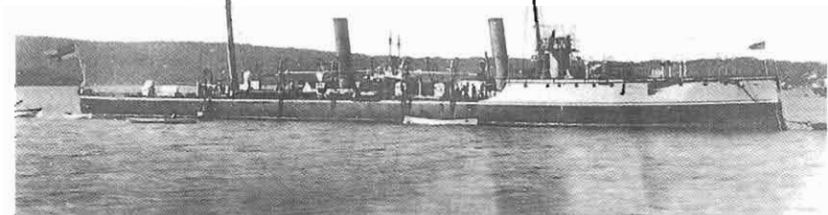
1. The nature and limited number of vessels which should be provided for this purpose.
2. How they are to be provided with Officers and crew.
3. The approximate cost of building, arming, and maintenance.
4. How they are to be employed in peace and war.
5. Under whose control are they to be placed.

The *class of vessels* which would in their Lordships' opinion be most suitable for this service are the "Archer" class, ten of which are ordered for our own Navy. They are 1,630 tons displacement, will steam 17 knots, and are to be armed with six 6" B.L. rifled guns. It would also be desirable to supplement them with two of the new class of very fast sea-going torpedo vessels just designed for our Navy. They will be 430 tons displacement, steam 19 knots, and are to be armed with three torpedo tubes for Whitehead torpedoes, one 4-inch B.L.R. gun, four quick-firing 3-pounders, and two machine guns. The *number of vessels* to be provided must depend in a very great measure upon the funds which can be obtained: but their Lordships are of opinion that five vessels of the "Archer" class, and two of the sea-going torpedo vessels, would in

time of war provide very fair protection (in addition to the squadron of our vessels on the Australian Station) to the large floating trade in Australasian waters.

2. The officers and crew for these vessels should be provided by the Imperial Navy and changed every three years.

3. The approximate cost of building, arming, and maintaining these vessels.



The torpedo gun boat HMS Boomerang (ex-HMS Whiting). One of seven warships supplied and manned by the Royal Navy as an auxiliary squadron for the defence of Australia. Boomerang arrived in Sydney in 1891 and returned to England in 1905. (AWM 300001)

(10)
Terms of 1887 Naval Agreement, in "Australian Forces Act 1887 – Naval
Defence Bill", CO 27 January 1888 - PRO: ADM 1/6927.

IMPERIAL DEFENCE ACT, 1888.
[51 & 52 VICT. CH. 32.]
CHAPTER 32.

An Act for defraying the expenses of carrying into effect an Agreement for Naval Defence with the Australasian Colonies, and providing for the Defence of certain Ports and Coaling Stations and for making further provision for Imperial Defence. [18th August 1888.]

Most Gracious Sovereign.

WHEREAS Your Majesty's Government and the Governments of Your Majesty's Colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, New Zealand, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia, having recognised the necessity of increasing the naval force for the protection of the floating trade in Australasian waters at their joint charge, have concluded the agreement (in this Act referred to as the Australasian Agreement) which is set out in the First Schedule to this Act:

And whereas we, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, being desirous that the above agreement should be ratified and carried into effect, have cheerfully granted unto your Majesty for that purpose the sum herein-after mentioned, and resolved that that sum should be raised as herein-after provided.

Part I.—Australasian Agreement.

1. The Australasian Agreement (set out in the First Schedule to this Act) is hereby ratified.

2. (1.) The Treasury shall from time to time issue out of the Consolidated Fund, or the growing produce thereof, such sums, not exceeding in the whole the sum of eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds, as may be required by the Admiralty for the purpose of building, arming, and completing for sea the vessels mentioned in articles six and seven of the Australasian Agreement.

(2.) The sums so issued shall be treated as an advance, and, if not borrowed as in this Act mentioned, shall be repaid to the Consolidated Fund out of the moneys annually provided by Parliament for naval services by an annuity of such amount as will repay the same, with interest at three per cent. per annum, within twelve years from the end of the financial year in which the first of the said sums was issued.

(3.) All sums received from the Governments of the Australasian Colonies in pursuance of the Australasian Agreement in respect of the annual sum either of thirty-five thousand pounds or of ninety-one thousand pounds mentioned in article seven of the agreement shall be applied, under the directions of the Treasury, as an appropriation in aid of naval expenditure.

3. (1.) The Treasury may from time to time, if they think fit, with a view to provide money for sums authorised by this part of this Act to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund, or for repaying to that fund all or any part of the sums so issued,

borrow by means of terminable annuities, for a period not exceeding the above-mentioned period of twelve years, any sums not exceeding in the aggregate eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

(2.) The annuities created in pursuance of this section shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament for naval services, and, if those moneys are insufficient, shall be charged upon and payable out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof at such times in each year as maybe fixed by the Treasury.

(3.) The annuities shall be created by warrant of the Treasury to the Bank of England directing them to inscribe in their books the amount of such annuities in the names directed by the warrant.

First Schedule.- Australasian Agreement

Agreement as to additional Force to be employed for the Protection of the Floating Trade in Australasian waters.

The Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c., and the Governments of Her Majesty's Colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, New Zealand, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia, having recognised the necessity of increasing the Naval Force for the protection of the floating trade in Australasian waters at their joint charge, have resolved to conclude for this purpose an agreement as follows:-

Article I.

There shall be established a force of sea-going ships of war herein-after referred to as "these vessels", to be provided, equipped, manned, and maintained at the joint cost of Imperial and Colonial Funds.

Article II.

These vessels shall be placed in every respect on the same status as Her Majesty's ships of war, whether in commission or not.

Article III.

The officers and men of such of these vessels as are in commission shall be changed triennially, and of those in reserve as may be considered advisable.

Article IV.

These vessels shall be under the sole control and orders of the Naval Commander-in-Chief for the time being appointed to command Her Majesty's ships and vessels on the Australian Station.

That these vessels shall be retained within the limits of the Australian Station as defined in the Standing Orders of the Naval Commander-in-Chief, and in times of peace or war shall be employed within such limits in the same way as are Her Majesty's ships of war, or employed beyond those limits only with the consent of the Colonial Governments.

Article V.

Notwithstanding the establishment of this joint naval force, no reduction is to take place in the normal strength of Her Majesty's naval force employed on the Australian Station, exclusive of surveying vessels.

Article VI.

These vessels shall consist of five fast cruisers and two torpedo gunboats, as represented by the "Archer" (improved type) and "Rattlesnake" classes in Her Majesty's Navy. Of the above, three cruisers and one gunboat to be kept always in

commission, the remainder being held in reserve, in Australasian ports, ready for commission whenever occasion arises.

Article VII.

1. The first cost of these vessels shall be paid out of Imperial funds, and the vessels fully equipped, manned, and sent to Australia.

2. The Colonies shall pay the Imperial Government interest at five per cent. on the first and prime cost of these vessels, such payment not to exceed the annual sum of thirty-five thousand pounds.

3. The Colonies shall, in addition, bear the actual charges for maintaining from year to year the three fast cruisers and one torpedo-gunboat which are to be kept, in commission in time of peace, and also of the three other vessels which are to remain in reserve, including the liability on account of retired pay to officers, pensions to men, and the charge for relief of crews; provided always, that the claim made by the Imperial Government under this head does not exceed the annual payment of ninety-one thousand pounds.

4. In the time of emergency or actual war, the cost of commissioning and maintaining the three vessels kept in reserve during peace shall be borne by the Imperial Government.

Article VIII.

In the event of any of these vessels being lost, they shall be replaced at cost of the Imperial Government.

Article IX.

1. This agreement shall be considered to become actually binding between the Imperial and the several Colonial Governments named in the first clause so soon as the Colonial Legislatures shall have passed special appropriations for the terms herein after mentioned, to which Acts this agreement shall be attached as a First Schedule.

2. The agreement shall be for a period of ten years, and only terminate if and provided notice has been given two years previously, viz., at the end of the eighth year, or at the end of any subsequent year, and then two years after such date.

3. On the termination of the agreement these vessels to remain the property of the Imperial Government.

Article X.

1. The payments named in Article VII. shall be considered as payments in advance, and shall first become due and payable on the dates on which the several vessels are put in commission; and the period of ten years referred to in Article IX. is to be calculated from the date of the first vessel being put in commission.

2. The share of these payments due from each Colony shall be paid annually in London by the Agents General and the Crown Agents respectively to such account as the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may direct.

3. The accounts of these vessels shall be closed each year on the 31st day of March, and the difference between expenditure and 91,000*l.* per annum for maintenance adjusted in subsequent annual payments, should the actual expenditure prove less than that sum.

Article XI.

Nothing in this agreement shall affect the purely local naval defence forces which have been, or may be, established in the several Colonies for harbour and coast defence. Such local forces in each Colony to be paid for entirely by that Colony, and to be solely under its control.

Article XII.

In time of peace, two ships, either of the normal Imperial squadron, or of these vessels, shall be stationed in New Zealand waters as their head-quarters. Should, however, such emergency arise as may, in the opinion of the Naval Commander-in-Chief, render it necessary to remove either or both of such ships, he shall inform the Governor of the reasons for such temporary removal.

Schedule to Agreement.

LIMITS OF AUSTRALIAN STATION.

The Australian station as referred to in Article IV. of the foregoing agreement, is bounded—

N on the north from the meridian of 95 degrees east, by the parallel of the tenth degree of south latitude, to 130 degrees east longitude, thence northward on that meridian to the parallel of two degrees north latitude, and thence on that parallel to the meridian of 136 degrees east longitude, thence north to 12 degrees north latitude, and along that parallel to 160 degrees west longitude.

W on the west by the meridian of 95 degrees east longitude.

S on the south by the Antarctic Circle.

E on the east by the meridian of 160 degrees of west longitude.

PART II

1900–1904



*The armoured cruiser HMS Orlando (right) is relieved by the second-class protected cruiser HMS Royal Arthur as flagship of the Australia Station in 1897.
(AWM 302227)*

(11)

Letter Rear Admiral Beaumont to Admiralty, 14 November 1901

- PRO: ADM 1/7514, f.233.

“Royal Arthur” at Sydney N.S.W.
14th November 1901.

Sir,

In compliance with paragraph 6 of the Instructions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty which were signified to me in your Confidential Letter of 6th December 1900, I have the honour to make the following report, for their Lordships' information, as to the present and probable future relations of the Commonwealth of Australia to the Royal Navy.

In accordance with Their Lordships' directions I conferred with the Governor General on all Naval matters as soon as I arrived in Sydney, but as the Commonwealth had then but recently been inaugurated, and as the Federal Parliament was not to assemble until May, Lord Hopetoun did not consider it practicable or desirable at that time to raise any questions as to the future relations of the Commonwealth with the Navy: in this view I fully agreed, knowing that it was not Their Lordships' desire to make the first proposal and that the time could be well spent in studying on the spot the conditions under which a better Agreement than the present one could be made.

2. So far as I can learn there was not before Federation much public interest in Naval matters, though there was amongst the people throughout the Colonies a general impression that Australians were unfairly kept out of the Ships that they paid for, which, at least, they thought should take on board periodically the Naval Brigades of each State for training: but, since Federation and the success of their Contingents in South Africa have given the people of Australia a much greater sense of their own importance, the general opinion on naval matters, as represented in the newspapers and in occasional speeches, is that the Australian Naval Forces must be made more of, and must share with the Royal Navy in any monetary support which the Commonwealth is able to afford, that the Training on board the Ships of the Australian Squadron, so long refused, is all that is necessary to make the existing Naval Brigades a most valuable reserve, and that with this training they would be fully capable of manning the Ships which are kept in Reserve in case of war.

3. . . . On the 1st July I received from the Governor General [a] letter . . . to which, after a careful consideration of its terms, and in view of the fact that I had no knowledge of the Defence Bill, I replied on the 16th. . . . It seemed to me that without the opportunity of exchanging views on the whole question of Australian Defence with the responsible Ministers of the Government, and without any clue to what they had proposed in their Bill, the only safe position that I could take was to outline what I considered to be the adequate Naval Force required against what I deemed would be the danger to which the floating trade and the coasts of Australia generally would be exposed during War, and to point out how this Force could be acquired most

efficiently and most economically. Lastly, in ignorance that by the Commonwealth Defence Bill the existing Naval Forces of all the States had been taken over by the Federal Government, I advised that, if they provided a sea-going force, they should not also support the State naval organisations. Shortly after, at the request of the Government, my letter was laid on the Table of the House, and has since been published in the newspapers.

4. Parliament has been too busy with other legislation to consider the Defence Bill, but the matter has received some attention from the Press and from public speakers as I have already mentioned. Broadly speaking the Merchant and trading element of the population are in favour of an effective sea Squadron for the protection of floating Trade and mercantile commerce generally, and to acquire this protection they would approve and support a largely increased contribution from the Commonwealth, but the Labour Members in the Federal and State Parliaments who control the working classes and hold the balance of power, it is said, are against any permanently constituted force whether military or naval, and will, I am told, oppose a contribution by the Commonwealth towards the maintenance of a Squadron of Imperial Ships.

5. The Officers in command of the Naval Forces in each State are also opposed to a contribution which they think will absorb the disposable resources of the Federal Government as regards Naval Defence, and though their continued existence is secured for a time under the Commonwealth Defence Bill, they are urging their claim to be organised into an united and efficiently trained force second only to the Royal Navy, in the belief that they are so to speak fighting for their lives.

Captain Creswell, the Senior of the four or five ex-Naval Officers who constitute the leaders of the party in favour of the expansion of the local Naval Forces into an Australian Navy, has drawn up a Scheme, with the approval of the Defence Minister, in which he sought to show that the permanent Squadron of commissioned Ships with trained crews, mentioned as necessary in my letter, need not be hired from the Imperial Government with nothing to show for the money at the end of ten years, but can be gradually created, as regards both Ships and men, by Australia. (See Appendix C [document 12].)

6. This Report and the paper of the Minister of Defence, Sir John Forrest, ... were sent to me recently by the Governor General with a request that I would during my visit to him at Melbourne give an interview to Mr. Barton, the Premier, and Sir John Forrest; I willingly acceded, and, after having conferred with Lord Hopetoun generally on the subject to be discussed, the prearranged interview took place.

7. Lord Hopetoun's opinion is that the Squadron of Ships in permanent commission fully manned with Trained crews and suitably apportioned amongst the parties to the Agreement is the best form of defence upon which to expend Federal funds, but he thinks that, unless the contribution required from the Commonwealth is moderate, the Federal Government will not get it from the Labour party in Parliament.

At my interview with the two Ministers I found that I had to begin at the beginning, and had practically to put the case of Australian Naval Defence before them from every point of view to enable them to appreciate how insufficient were the

schemes which proposed to provide Defence from the State Naval Forces, or, as in Captain Creswell's Scheme, to create it ship by ship at a great cost in a series of years. Both Ministers were quick to grasp the points, and admitted that the larger modern Ships kept in continuous commission with full crews of trained men which could be acquired by arrangement with the Imperial Government on payment of an annual contribution would be the best form of Naval Defence, but, as will be seen from his paper, Sir John Forrest believes that no scheme "which does not provide for the utilization of local Naval Brigades at the various ports of the Commonwealth, with the express object of gradually building up an Australian Navy will meet with public approval", and he considered that some method of attaining this, end should be devised.

He stated that the cost to the Commonwealth for the maintenance of the Naval Forces with such Vessels as remained to them in the different States was £80,000 a year, and he wished to know whether it would not be possible at a moderate extra cost, to train these men in His Majesty's Ships, or in the vessels kept in Reserve, under Officers of the Royal Navy so as to form them into an efficient Naval Reserve capable of manning ships in time of war.

8. Mr. Barton, also, said he understood that the number of ships mentioned in my letter as necessary was for the whole station: he therefore wished to know how many would have to be maintained by the Federal Government in commission and in Reserve: I replied that it was entirely a matter for arrangement with the other parties to the Agreement, which would be the Imperial Government and New Zealand., but that in my opinion it might well be somewhat as follows:—

<u>Imperial Government</u>	<u>Commonwealth</u>	<u>New Zealand</u>
1 - 1st. cl. Cruiser.	Nil	1 - 1st. cl. Cruiser.
1 - 2nd. " "	2 - 2nd. cl. Cruisers	1 - 2nd. " "
1 - 2nd. cl. Cruiser	1 - 2nd. cl. Cruiser	Nil.

Note. 1st class Cruiser "Royal Arthur" type, 2nd class Cruiser "Challenger" type.

9. The contribution to cover the interest on first cost, and the entire maintenance of the three 2nd class Cruisers on the model of the present agreement, I could not give as I had not the necessary data but, judging by the estimates which were made in 1886 for the existing Agreement, I roughly put the contribution at 2½ times the present one, or £106,000 x 2.5 = £265,000.

In reply to Sir John Forrest as to whether the existing Vessels belonging to the States had any fighting value, I said I thought not (I have not yet seen them), now [sic] were they very suitable for training purposes, but that, with regard to his desire to increase the efficiency of the local forces by training them at sea, I thought the Admiralty might allow the "Ringarooma" class when they had been relieved by the new cruisers, to be distributed at the Naval Brigade Centers to form the Training Ships for the local forces, the Commonwealth providing the nucleus of the permanent ratings which they would require and the whole cost of maintenance, while so employed.

A good many other points connected with the question were touched upon and made clear by the two Ministers, who gave me to understand on leaving that they were inclined to think a practical solution of the difficult question might be found on the basis of a contribution for three modern 2nd class Cruisers as their share of the seagoing defence, and the loan of Vessels of the "Ringarooma" class to give the sea training and so raise the efficiency and increase the importance of the local Naval Forces which public opinion, they said, would demand.

The one point upon which they seemed unwilling to enter was the release of the Admiralty from the obligation of keeping the ships in Australian waters at all times: they knew that that clause in the Agreement had been held to be of much importance by the Premiers at the London Conference of 1897, and they were not inclined to alter or disturb it. I believe that, as long as any contribution is accepted this condition will be demanded. The Ministers thought that in time of War the request to take the Ships beyond the limits of the Station would be readily granted, but I do not think so, as long as there appeared to be any risk of attack from stray Vessels of the enemy.

The matter now rests at this point while it is being considered by the Government, and I hope that during my forthcoming visit to Melbourne with the Squadron further progress will be made.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Lewis Beaumont

Rear-Admiral.

Commander-in-Chief.

(12)

Report by Captain William Creswell enclosed in letter from Beaumont to Admiralty 14 November 1901 as Appendix C - PRO: ADM 1/7514, f.257.

The Best Method of Employing Australian Seamen in the Defence of Commerce and Ports.

SCHEME

First Step

15. The provision of one Modern ship of war, to be ordered forthwith, specially designed to suit local conditions, and to be typical of the class of ship required for Australian Defence.
16. Her armament to be of the latest kind in use in the Royal Navy. Discipline, routine, and training to be that of the Royal Navy.
17. The Naval Commander in Chief on the Station to be empowered to inspect the ship, and all men trained, at any time, and to order alterations to be made in drill, routine, etc. In time of war, the ship to be placed under the orders of the Naval Commander in Chief for service in Australian waters.
18. The men trained will in time of war man the Federal Ship of War: the remainder to be placed at the disposal of the Commander in Chief to man ships in Reserve and fill up casualties.
19. The cost of the Federal Naval Force, in peace or war, and however employed, to be borne by the Federal Government.
20. The Federal Ship of war to carry a full complement of Officers and Instructors, but only sufficient permanent crew for navigating, care taking of armament, etc.
21. Supernumerary Junior officers and Midshipmen to be appointed for training purposes as requisite to meet requirements of expansion.
22. The coast and ports of Australia to be divided into Naval Districts for training purposes. Each District to raise one Ship's Company. The complement of one Australian Defence ship to be the unit, and under the orders of the Commanding Officer of the District, who will be responsible to the Naval Commandant.
23. The Federal ship will make the round of all Districts at least twice a year for the continuous Training afloat of the Naval Force, which it will be compulsory for Officers and men to undergo at least once a year.
24. All present Gun-boats and Gun-vessels for harbour service to be surveyed, and their usefulness, or otherwise, decided upon. Such as are now quite obsolete, and deemed to a greater expense to maintain than can be justified by their efficiency, to be paid off and sold.
25. The whole question of Harbour and Roadstead defence to be reconsidered, and organised on lines more in conformity with modern requirements.
26. Harbour and Roadstead defence has remained in the condition it was in when the *Auxiliary Squadron Agreement* was signed, excepting that the plant has depreciated.
27. A training ships or ships for boys for Naval and Mercantile Service, and a *Navigation School for Naval Reserve*. affording them opportunities for rising in Mercantile Marine will attract best men to the Naval Force.

28. COST OF ONE CRUISER

£300,00

Expenditure:—

Interest on purchase of Cruiser	£9,000
Wages to complement of 129 Officers and men, and boys	£16,000
Coal, ammunition, Stores, etc.	<u>£12,000</u>
	£37,000

Unforeseen, and incidental to initiation of new service, training to additional officers and instructors to meet expansion of service.

(a)* £10,000

To be met by transfer of 1/3 of present contribution to Auxiliary Squadron to Australian Naval Defence.

£35,000

And reduction in local Naval Defence by using present Staff and re-organisation.

£12,000

£47,000

29. 1st ship to be ordered forthwith and completed in 1903. Completion of First Ship to be followed by:

2nd Ship to be completed in 1905

3rd Ship to be completed in 1907

4th Ship to be completed in 1909

The training duties required will be divided between the first three Ships. The cost of maintenance of the three will be considerable less than treble the cost of maintenance of the first ship.

30. Cost of accessory establishments, training ship, etc., to be met from (a)* for three ships gives total of £30,000.

An annual appropriation act extending over ten years, setting aside £300,000 to £350,000 annually for Naval Defences would be a more satisfactory arrangement. It would suffice to provide a Fleet of five cruisers suitable for our Defence and leave no debt. If continued, even at a reduced amount, it would provide for all renewals as required. The total vote for Defence is £850,000. The Naval Vote of £350,000 is a moderate proportion in a county only liable to a naval attack.

Organization

31. The ships of the Australian Naval Force will be manned by reduced crews and raised to war strength from our Naval Reserve.

32. The Australian Ships will, if required, be the reserve Squadron to the Imperial Fleet in these waters, the latter being always fully manned and ready for immediate service.

33. The above is a close parallel of the plan in force with the Home Fleets of the United Kingdom, where there is:

(a) The Channel Fleet, fully manned and ready in every particular for instant service, and

(b) The 1st Reserve, not fully manned, and raised to war strength from the coast guard.

34. For considerations that scarcely weigh with Australia, the 1st Reserve Fleet has recently been raised to a very forward condition of preparedness, and exercised

quarterly. Something but little short of this can be accomplished here, the difference being delay in calling up the reserve men, in private employment, instead of under one command as in the Home Coast Guard.

The Australian Seaman is readily trained.

35. By training and practising him in the Ship in which he will be required to serve, he can be made efficient for service in a comparatively short time.

58. It has been said that the Australian is a poor seaman and does not take readily to sea work. This scarcely needs contradiction, Australia has inherited her due share of the Nation's genius for sea enterprise, either for war or commerce. The scheme put forward has been designed to develop our Naval capacity at the least (if any) *additional cost to the country, but I would respectfully ask whether it would not be in the true interests of Australia and the Empire, even at considerable cost, to develop locally those qualities of race, and that sea profession which first gave us and has since held for us the land we live in.*

(signed) W.R. Creswell
Captain and Naval Comt., Queensland.
28/9/01.

(13)

Notes on Captain William Creswell's report by Rear-Admiral Beaumont,
7 November 1901 - PRO: ADM 1/7514, f.267.

"The scheme here proposed, while it will be as effective in War as the fresh Agreement, will cost no more"

I cannot agree to either of these Statements. The whole of my experience in the Navy goes to prove that a Fleet of Ships which are husbanded in peace, have reduced complements of Officers and men, are not habitually at Sea in Company and when mobilised for War have their crew completed by half trained men, cannot possible be as effective as the fully manned Ships of a Standing Navy.

It would be strange indeed if it were otherwise, and it is important that there should be no misunderstanding as to my professional opinion on this point—that any scheme which only provides for partial manning and occasional cruises of exercise will only produce War Ships and Squadrons much inferior to those kept in Commission.

The inferiority will be most felt at the outset of War when success is of the greatest value and of the most importance. As regards expense, the cost in peace cannot be taken as a standard of comparison between rival schemes—for if one system is less efficient in War it may prove vastly the more costly one.

The scheme contemplates the provision of One Ship to be manned by a crew of Australian Officers and men, for which one third (£35,000) of the present contribution is to be stopped to meet the expense.

In each successive two years one additional Ship is to be provided, £35,000 being taken from the contribution for each. As the Agreement, however, would have terminated on the first year that a reduction was made, it follows that for probably five years, there would be only from one to three Ships, more or less completely manned, in lieu of seven Ships under the present Agreement.

There is nothing said in the Paper as to the enemy against which defence is required, but it really governs the question.

It is clear that no Ships of small capacity, however heavily armed, will be sent into Australian Waters, as there are no hostile bases near enough from which they can come.

The ships that will be sent will be the large Ocean Cruisers possessed by the enemy, such as the "Jeanne D'Arc", "Gromoboi", etc. It will not be difficult for them to find temporary bases on the coast where they can meet their supply vessels and replenish with Coal and with Stores.

Their object will be the destruction of the Ships carrying the Commerce of the Empire, and only if much superior to our Ships will they allow themselves to be brought to action—nor unless the conditions are all in their favour will they be tempted into shore enterprises—they will be content to destroy Commerce on the high Seas without risk to themselves.

Being big and of large coal carrying capacity they will keep the Sea and maintain high speeds in all weathers, thus covering great distances and eluding pursuit. Also being

big they will carry a powerful armament as against unarmoured Ships and will have a large reserve of ammunition.

It is considered at home that such Ships will only be caught and destroyed by a similar Ship of greater or equal power and the "King Alfred", "Drake", "Good Hope" and "Leviathan" have been built for the purpose. Such vessels are out of the question for Australia to acquire, and the only alternative is to have a mobile squadron of well armed Ships which can keep the Sea in all weathers and steam the distances between the principal ports of Australia at a high speed.

No "Jeanne D'Arc" or "Gromoboi" would remain in the neighborhood of four such Ships and it would become a very doubtful undertaking for an enemy to set out on Commerce destroying where two Squadrons of such Ships were operating—the risk would be considerable and the time at the disposal of the raider too limited for much to be done.

It will thus be seen that one, two or even three Ships cannot, except by a lucky chance, interfere with such a raider—also that in any case a Ship under 5,000 tons is too small to keep the Sea and perform the particular service required.

The proportion of Coal, Gunpowder and Stores must be such as to give the most efficient continuous service at Sea.

Practically there can be no defence, of the Floating Trade of Australia, of any value until a homogeneous Squadron of at least four Ships of over 5,000 tons is provided.

The scheme then goes into details to shew that the one, two or three Ships can be built and manned by Officers and men enrolled and trained in Australia, and that a sufficient fighting efficiency will be attained, by the system proposed to afford the necessary security to Australian Commerce. *I do not think so—in my opinion the training and efficiency of what may be called the "Preventive Squadron", i.e. the Squadron which will deter the enemy from attempts on Australian Commerce, must be of the highest possible order and can only be reached by continuous service—for the Ships which will be sent by the enemy will individually outclass any that can be brought against them, and would far more outclass any Reserve Ships mobilised at the outbreak of War and unused to working together as a Squadron.*

The case of the "Protector" is cited to show what can be done by the Reserve System, but the performance of the "Protector" had really nothing to do with War—it only showed that she could be navigated to China and back at economical speed by *her Officers and Crew.*

As regards cost it appears to me that every one of the estimates given is too low, and that as the system depends for its success upon the gradual training of a body of Officers and men proceeding concurrently with the acquisition of the material in Ships Stores and Armaments, it will cost a great deal more than has been shown and will, for a great many years, be unequal to its task.

Lastly I consider that, assuming the number given, 32,510, to correctly represent the males engaged in Sea and River traffic in Australia, the corresponding figure might fairly be considered to be Two Millions for the United Kingdom and

Ireland—and if out of that number only 60,000 men form the Active Service Seamen of the Royal Navy and 27,000 is the maximum number enrolled in the Royal Naval Reserves—the proportion at that rate available for Australia out of 32,510 would be 1,400 men—a very small number out of which to form a Navy unless it can be shewn that every man is really desirous of following the Sea as a career.

Lewis Beaumont
Rear-Admiral
Commander-in-Chief

7 November 1901



*Captain William Rooke Creswell as Naval Commandant Queensland, 1900.
(AWM P044412141162)*

'Naval Defence: Minute by Sir John Forrest', Minutes of Proceedings and Papers Laid Before the Conference between Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self Governing Colonies, 1902, Miscellaneous No.144, Appendix 5 - Admiralty Library, London.

[NOTE.—*This paper was not laid before the conference.*]

Department of Defence,
Melbourne, 15th March 1902.

Minute to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister as to Naval Defence.

I have the honour to submit for consideration my views as to the means to be adopted so as to provide for the Naval Defence of Australia.

I.—PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

1. It will, I think, be generally conceded that it is the duty of the Commonwealth to adequately contribute to the defence of Australia and of its floating trade. We admit this obligation in regard to our local military defence, but we must remember that naval forces require to be even more efficient than military forces, which have the great advantage of local knowledge to assist them in any active operations in their own country.

2. So long as the sea supremacy of the mother country is maintained Australia is fairly secure from invasion, but in time of war we would be exposed to attacks upon the floating trade and to raids on our coastal towns by powerful cruisers. It is therefore obligatory that adequate means should be taken to provide against such emergency.

3. Owing to the progress made by foreign Powers in the construction and maintenance of powerful sea-going cruisers, the present Auxiliary Squadron has become inadequate, and the Commonwealth is confronted with the immediate necessity of arranging for up-to-date naval protection being provided.

4. Rear-Admiral Sir Lewis Beaumont, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Station, has already given his views on the present necessities of Australian Naval Defence in a letter to the Governor-General, which was presented to Parliament on 16th August 1901, from which I extract the following:—

"(1) I can give what, in my opinion, are the obligations of the Federal Government in respect of the Naval Defence of the Australian Commonwealth.

(a.) They should cause to be maintained on the Australian Station, as defined by the Admiralty, a squadron of at least six cruisers in commission, two of them first-class cruisers of 7,000 to 8,000 tons displacement, and the others second-class cruisers of the improved "Highflyer" type.

(b.) There should, in addition, be two such second-class cruisers in reserve.

(c.) These vessels ought to be replaced gradually by more modern vessels as the development of naval construction renders it desirable or the increase of foreign fleets makes it necessary.

(d.) The vessels should be under the Admiral in command of His Majesty's ships on the station, the crews subject to the Naval Discipline Act, and embarked under the same terms of engagement, as in the Royal Navy.

(e.) The head-quarters of the squadron ought to remain at Sydney, owing to the repairing facilities and convenience of the existing depôts there, but the ships should be attached in turn for ordinary peace service, when not required for fleet exercises to suitable ports in each State, where the Federal Government should give facilities for the gradual establishment of the secondary naval bases which will be essential in war as regards coal, stores, and repairs.

The above gives, in broad lines, the naval force adequate for the Naval Defence of Australia at the present time. It will be seen, from the size and number of the ships required, from the necessity which will undoubtedly arise of replacing them from time to time by more modern ships, from the fact that they must be continuously manned by trained officers and men, and that the ships must not only be maintained in commission but must be gradually provided with new bases, that it is beyond the power of the Commonwealth at the outset to create such a force.

(2) It follows, therefore, that such a force can only be acquired and maintained by arrangement with the Imperial Government, and I believe that if this course was adopted it would also follow that the greatest amount of good would be maintained at the smallest possible cost.

(3) In view of the Federal Government providing for the immediate future an adequate and up-to-date sea-going fleet for the defence of Australian floating commerce and the protection of Australian territory, I consider that it should take no part in the creation or maintenance of Naval Reserves or State Naval Forces, which experience has shown cannot be utilised in a manner at all commensurate with their cost, or assist, except within too narrow limits, in the defence of the Commonwealth.

The future may see the creation of an Australian Navy, but for the present the safety and welfare of the Commonwealth require that the Naval Force in Australian waters should be a sea-going fleet of modern ships, fully equipped, fully manned with trained crews, homogeneous as to type and personnel, and under one command.

For the Federal Government to form out of the existing naval organisations a permanent force as the nucleus of the Naval Defence Force, the main body of which would be derived from Naval Brigades, as suggested in your Excellency's letter, would not be sufficient, unless the force is only intended to supplement the crews of His Majesty's ships in war; if not, then modern ships would have to be provided and maintained by the Federal Government for the officers and men of the Commonwealth Naval Force, in which they could be trained at sea, and a part maintained at all times in a state of efficiency and readiness for war, a system which would be much more costly and less efficient than if the ships and men were provided by arrangement with the Imperial Government."

We have in the above clear statement of Admiral Beaumont the opinion of an able and experienced naval officer on the question, and it is fortunate that we have been placed in possession of his views, inasmuch as they represent an expert and impartial opinion worthy of the greatest respect and entitled to the fullest consideration.

II.—EXISTING NAVAL FORCES.

5. The Commonwealth has taken over the local naval forces from the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, which are at present

maintained at an annual cost of about 75,000*l.* These forces consist of 242 Permanent officers and men and 1,637 partially-paid members of naval brigades.

6. For years past no means have been provided in New South Wales for giving to the local naval force any sea training. They have no ships and are, therefore, merely sailors drilled on shore, and would be of little value as a naval force in time of war. In Victoria there is the harbour defence ship, "Cerberus," and four torpedo-boats, but the existing means are inadequate for obtaining effective sea training for the men. In Queensland there are the gun-boats, "Gayundah" and "Paluma," and in South Australia there is the gun-boat, "Protector," and in both of these States a limited amount of sea training is carried out. The Colonial Defence Committee has stated, *with regard to these local harbour defence ships, that it is difficult to obtain from them an effect commensurate with the outlay entailed.*

7. These local forces, maintained under existing conditions, appear, therefore, to be of small value for naval defence, and if they are to be organised in the future, so as to provide a force of trained seamen, available for supplementing the crews and for the manning of sea-going cruisers in time of war, suitable ships must be provided in which to train the officers and men at sea.

III.—RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

8. Whatever may be done in the future, if we accept, as I think we must, Admiral Beaumont's opinion, that "it is beyond the power of the Commonwealth at the outset to create a force adequate for the Naval Defence of Australia, and that such a force can only be acquired and maintained by arrangement with the Imperial Government", it is absolutely necessary, for a time at any rate, to depend upon the Royal Navy for our naval defence. The Commonwealth under the existing agreement pays the Admiralty 106,000*l.* a year, and New Zealand pays 20,000*l.* a year; but, as a more powerful fleet is required, a greater contribution will be necessary under a new arrangement. I am informed that the cost of the annual maintenance of the "Royal Arthur" alone is more than our whole contribution of 106,000*l.*

9. I would recommend that until a more permanent basis for the Naval Defence of the Empire is decided upon, the Naval Defence of the Commonwealth be carried out on the following basis:—

- (a.) That the existing agreement with the Imperial Government be readjusted and extended for ten years (unless cancelled sooner by mutual consent). The number and class of ships to be stationed in Australian waters, the annual contribution, and all other matters to be definitely dealt with in such revised agreement.
- (b.) That the existing Naval Militia forces be made effective for supplementing the manning of sea-going ships in time of war, and that two ships commanded by officers of the Royal Navy be allotted by the Admiralty for their naval instruction, and with that object to visit the various ports throughout the year. The militia naval forces to be available for the protection of the Commonwealth on land as well as on sea.
- (c.) That expert opinion be obtained as to what extent the "Cerberus," "Protector," gunboats, torpedo boats, and existing armaments can be profitably utilised.

(d.) That the permanent naval defence forces now existing in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland be reduced in strength, and only a staff sufficient for the instruction of the Naval Militia on shore be retained.

It would seem to be absolutely necessary that in any such new arrangement provision should be made for one or two powerful cruisers to be stationed in Australian waters capable of successfully resisting an attack by similar warships of foreign nations.

IV.—PROPOSAL FOR AN AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

10. If it were desirable for Australia to have a navy of her own, maintained altogether by the Commonwealth, we could in that case buy our own ships of war, man them in our own way, and be quite independent of the Imperial Navy.

11. In order to provide even the small squadron proposed by Admiral Beaumont of two first-class and six second-class cruisers, together with depôts and stores would probably cost 3,600,000, on the following basis:—

Two first-class cruisers	£1,000,000
Six second-class cruisers	2,500,000
Depôts and stores, viz., naval yards, &c.	<u>100,000</u>
Total capital cost	<u>3,600,000</u>

12. The maintenance of this squadron in Australian waters, if fully manned and equipped in a way that would enable it to engage successfully the first-class cruisers of the enemy, with two of the second-class cruisers in use for training, say 2,000 men of the Naval Militia, would probably amount to about one million a year, including interest at 5 per cent. per annum on the capital cost.

13. It has been proposed, and the plan is much favoured by some, that during time of peace a squadron thus organised should only be manned with sufficient men to maintain the ships in working efficiency, and should be wholly employed in training the Naval Militia, and that in time of war it should be fully manned by such Naval Militia collected from the several ports of the Commonwealth. There would no doubt be a saving in maintenance by this course, but Admiral Beaumont is of opinion that a squadron thus mobilised and manned would not be able to meet on equal terms the powerful cruisers with highly-trained crews that would be certain to be used against us, and that "for the present the safety and welfare of the Commonwealth require that the Naval Force in Australian waters should be a sea-going fleet of modern ships, fully equipped, fully manned with trained crews, homogeneous as to type and personnel, and under one command."

14. I am not prepared to recommend under existing conditions the establishment of an Australian Navy. Even if it were established, I am afraid it would not be very efficient, for besides the enormous cost of replacing the fleet from time to time with more modern ships, there would be no change for the officers and crews, who would go on year after year in the same ships, subject to the same influences, and, I fear, with deteriorating effects.

V.—THE PERMANENT NAVAL DEFENCE OF THE EMPIRE.

15. In regard to defence we must altogether get rid of the idea that we have different interests to those of the rest of the Empire, and we must look at the matter *from a broad common standpoint*. If the British nation is at war, so are we; if it gains victories or suffers disasters, so do we; and therefore it is of the same vital interest to us as to the rest of the Empire that our supremacy on the ocean shall be maintained. There is only one sea to be supreme over, and we want one fleet to be mistress over that sea.

16. We are bound also to consider and to fully realise that we belong to a nation which for centuries has been mistress of the sea, and that the position we occupy in Australia to-day in being an British territory, and having always enjoyed peace and security, is absolutely attributable to the protection given to us by the British flag.

17. We are accustomed to travel about the world for the purpose of trade or in pursuit of pleasure, and to feel when we visit foreign countries that our lives and property are secure and in specially safe keeping. We then realise fully the great privilege and advantage of being a British subject, and feel proud when we see the flag of our mother land everywhere in evidence, ready, willing, and able to protect us.

18. Our aim and object should be to make the Royal Navy the Empire's Navy, supported by the whole of the self-governing portions of the Empire, and not solely supported by the people of the British Isles, as is practically the case at the present time. It is, I think, our plain duty to take a part in, the additional obligations cast upon the mother country by the expansion of the Empire, and the extra burdens cast upon her in maintaining our naval supremacy.

19. If a proposal were adopted that the Empire should have one fleet maintained by the whole nation, every part contributing to its support on some plan to be mutually arranged, probably on that of the comparative trade of each country, and not, necessarily on an uniform basis of contribution, what a splendid idea would be consummated, and what a bulwark for peace throughout the world would be established! Besides which, we would be doing our duty to the mother country, which has been so generous to us during all our early years.

20. If the Federations of Canada and Australia and the Colonies of South Africa and New Zealand were to agree to this great principle of one fleet for the Empire's Naval Defence, then the question of contributions and all other matters connected with it could be afterwards arranged by mutual agreement. I cannot think that for Canada and Australia to each have a few war ships, and the Cape and New Zealand a few also, each independent of the other, is a plan suited to Empire; such a plan would seem to be in accord with the actions and sentiments of a number of petty States rather than in accord with the necessities and aspirations of a great free united people.

21. If such a plan can be brought about, it would be necessary for the "British Dominions beyond the Seas" to be adequately represented at the Admiralty, and I feel sure this could be arranged on a mutually satisfactory basis. In time of war there could not be any division of responsibility, and, until a more extended federation of the Empire is established, that responsibility would have to rest upon the Imperial Government.

22. It would be advisable that means should be provided for training boys in Canada, Australia, and other places, and for the drafting into the Navy of a certain number annually, and greater facilities might possibly be given for officers entering the

Navy. By these means the personnel of the Navy would consist to some extent of British subjects from different parts of the Empire, and this might in time have the effect of a greater personal interest in the Navy being taken by the people living outside the British Isles than has hitherto been the case when all have been recruited from the mother country.

23. Great Britain spends annually on her Army and Navy about 50,000,000*l.* (not including the South African war), or about 1*l.* 5*s* per head of her population. If the Australian Commonwealth contributed in the same proportion it would amount to something like 5,000,000*l.* a year, whereas our entire military and naval defence vote does not exceed 800,000*l.* a year, or only about 4*s.* per head of our population.

24. It may, of course, be said that in building up another Britain in the Southern Hemisphere, thus providing another home for our countrymen, and by extending British influence and trade, we have been doing a greater work for the Empire than by contributing towards Imperial naval defence, but I think the time has gone by for us to use such arguments, as both duty and stern necessity require that we shall stand shoulder to shoulder with the motherland in the determination to maintain inviolate the integrity of the Empire. That this is the sentiment deep-rooted in the hearts of the Australian people has, I am proud to say, been shown during the South African war, which we have made our own, proving unmistakably to the world that our interests in war as well as in peace are indissolubly bound up with the country from which our fathers came, and to which we are all proud to belong.

25. I would suggest that the Imperial Government should be consulted as to the advisability of holding a conference in London, at which representatives from Canada, the Cape, New Zealand, and Australia might be asked to discuss and if possible arrive at a conclusion as to the views herein set forth, or any others that may be submitted having for their object the strengthening of the Naval Defence of the Empire, and that the conclusions arrived at should be then forwarded for the consideration of the Governments and Parliaments concerned.

JOHN FORREST,
Minister of State for Defence.

(15)

Private letter, Rear-Admiral Beaumont to Lord Selborne, 10 March 1902
- Selborne Ms., 17, f.33.

Commander-in-Chief,
Australia Station,
10th March 1902.

Dear Lord Selborne,

When in Melbourne for a few days in February I did not see Lord Hopetoun, who was away, but I saw Sir John Forrest the Minister of Defence and was sorry to find that very little progress had been made in the matter of the naval defence of the Commonwealth.

The time for Mr. Barton's and Sir John Forrest's departure for England is drawing near and I am afraid they will leave without having come to any agreement with their colleagues as to what they want or what they ought to have.

Sir John cannot make up his mind, and no-one else thinks much about it—he inclines now to an increased contribution pure and simple and talks of disbanding the local naval forces which but the other day he said must be considered whatever happened. Of one thing I am glad— he is sure now that Captain Creswell's scheme will not do for them. The popular cry lately has been in favour of Creswell's Australian Navy—though it is more in the papers than amongst the people—but nevertheless I do not think the government could carry through proposals which involved the extinction of the existing naval forces and what I fear is that with the larger contribution they will ask that the Imperial Government shall take on these men as a Naval reserve—training them in H.M. Ships and paying their retaining fee.

This would be greatly to our disadvantage—in the first place by diverting a large sum of money to support a force for which there would be but a small demand and because it would much lower the efficiency of the Imperial Squadron to have to use them as training ships in addition to their legitimate functions.

There would not be the same objection to these men being formed into naval brigades in each state and trained under their own officers in the present cruisers at the expense of the Commonwealth. In which case a somewhat smaller contribution might be accepted.

. . . New Zealand . . .

(signed) Lewis Beaumont.

(16)

Memorandum by Rear Admiral Reginald Custance, 3 March 1902, Z122/01,
'Commonwealth of Australia – Naval Defences – Co-operation of the "Colony"'
- PRO: ADM 1/7529, f.1-18.

THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL QUESTION, 1902.

The Imperial Defence Act, 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 32), contains the agreement under which the Admiralty maintain the special additional ships for the protection of floating trade in Australasian waters. The agreement is now terminable at two years' notice.

The vessels provided consist of:—

Five "Katoomba's," of 2,575 tons.

Two "Karrakatta's," of 735 tons.

of which three "Katoomba's" and one "Karrakatta" are kept in commission, and the remainder in reserve.

These vessels are manned by officers and men of the Royal Navy, and have the same status as any of His Majesty's ships, but they cannot be employed beyond the limits of the Australian Station without the consent of the Colonial Governments.

So long as the agreement is in force no reduction can be made in the *normal strength* of the naval force on the station, exclusive of surveying vessels; and in time of peace two ships of war must be stationed in New Zealand waters, except in case of emergency, when they can be removed, the reasons for doing so being communicated to the Governor.

The instructions issued by the Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Beaumont, dated 6th December 1900, impress upon him that it is desirable to remove the present restriction to the employment of the vessels of the Australian Squadron elsewhere than in Australian waters.

The importance of retaining to the Admiralty the exclusive control over the movements of His Majesty's ships in time of war is to be the chief object to be attained.

The formation of an Australian Naval Reserve is thought to be not feasible, but the naval aspirations of the Colonies can be suitably directed towards local harbour defence. Training ships cannot be spared for the use of men who cannot serve on the same conditions as men of the Imperial Navy.

The memorandum attached sets forth that the two directions in which the interests of the Navy can be best served are—

1. So large an increase of the joint contribution as to permit an adequate naval force to be kept in Australian waters to the satisfaction of the Australians.
2. An understanding with the Commonwealth, which would secure to them a certain number and class of ships for the protection of their trade and coast in Australian waters, but would leave to the Admiralty the unfettered control of the larger and more important ships which they might see fit at any time to send there or remove.

On the 14th June 1901, the Governor-General addressed to the Commander-in-Chief a letter which was in substance a reproduction of the minute of

the Prime Minister, Mr. Barton, dated the 10th June, and in which the views of the Commander-in-Chief were asked for.

The most important passage was as follows: "There will probably be some objection to the establishment and maintenance of a large permanent naval defence force. The basis of the organisation which will probably find the most favour will be that the permanent forces shall be limited as far as possible, consistent with maintaining an efficient nucleus, and that the main body shall consist of Naval Brigades at the various ports which shall be subjected to a periodical course of drill afloat."

In his reply dated the 16th July 1901, the Commander-in-Chief recommended that Australia should provide:—

2 First Class Cruisers.

6 Second Class Cruisers.

of which two of the latter should be in reserve, and the remainder in commission.

These should be gradually replaced by more modern vessels.

They should be under the Admiral and the Naval Discipline Act.

The headquarters should be at Sydney, but when not required for fleet exercises, the ships should be attached in turn to suitable outlying ports where secondary bases should be gradually formed.

The Federal Government should not support State Naval forces.

In a semi-official letter to Lord Hopetoun, dated 22nd July 1901, the Commander-in-Chief further explained that the eight cruisers referred to in the official letter would be the whole force for the station

The gist of the Commander-in-Chief's letter of 14th November 1901, appears to be that the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Defence admit that ships in permanent commission, with trained crews, would be the best form of defence on which to spend the Federal money, but the Governor-General thinks that unless the contribution from Australia is moderate the Federal Government will not get it from the labour party in Parliament, and the Minister of Defence believes that no scheme which does not provide for the utilisation of local Naval Brigades at the various ports of the Commonwealth, with the express object of gradually building up an Australian Navy, will meet with public approval.

The Commander-in-Chief has suggested that the whole squadron on the station should consist of eight ships, which should be provided thus:—

—	Imperial Government.	Commonwealth.	New Zealand.
In Commission	1 "Royal Arthur" 1 "Challenger"	2 "Challenger"	1 "Royal Arthur" 1 "Challenger"
In Reserve	1 "Challenger"	1 "Challenger"	Nil.

Apparently the present agreement to be taken as the model for the new. Also that the "Katoomba" class, when relieved by the new cruisers, should be distributed at the Naval Brigade centres to form the training ships for the local forces, the Commonwealth providing the nucleus of the permanent ratings which they would require, and the whole cost of maintenance when so employed.

It will be seen that the total complements will be increased by 977, and that while the crews of the Imperial ships will be increased by 75 / reduced by 349 those of the additional ships will be raised by 1,326.

It will be noted that the force in Commission is to be reduced from 11 to 10 ships. It is presumed that the Commander-in-Chief has satisfied himself that the work of the station can be done by the reduced number, but it would be well to have a direct opinion from him on that point.

Another point requiring attention is the class of ship proposed for the new squadron. Neither the "Royal Arthur" nor the "Challenger" can be considered to be up to modern requirements. It is considered that at least two of the ships should be a match for the Japanese Armoured Cruisers or for the Russian ships of the "Askold" class, and that the remainder should be equal to meeting the Japanese or French Second Class Cruisers.

Cost.

The charge for building and completing for sea the ships provided by the Colonies may be taken as:—

PRESENT SHIPS.	PROPOSED SHIPS.
£849,764	(Say) £2,250,067

The average annual charge for maintenance may be taken as—

PRESENT SHIPS.	PROPOSED SHIPS.
£118,500*	£282,700

The annual contribution based on allowing 5 per cent. interest on the first cost of the vessels, and providing for the cost of maintenance would be—

	PRESENT SHIPS.	PROPOSED SHIPS.
Interest -	35,000	112,500
Maintenance -	<u>91,000</u>	<u>282,700</u>
	<u>£126,000</u>	<u>£395,200</u>

The proposals of the Commander-in-Chief would divide the cost thus—

Australia	£218,225
New Zealand	£176,975

which would obviously allot an undue proportion to the latter.

Remarks.

The first reflection which is suggested on reading these papers is the misleading effect of the words *Naval defence*, which carry with them the idea of *locality*, since we cannot separate the word *defence* from the thing to be defended. The force which is identified with such words will grow up and develop with its attention fixed on local

* The actual charge for 1900-01 was 148,393/.

defence rather than on the hostile force from which attack is expected. No fighting force can be expected to succeed if it acts only on the defensive. It must be prepared to attack the force which threatens: in other words, to assume the offensive.

It is offence and not defence which should be placed in the forefront of any scheme organising a force for war purposes.

It is under the mistaken idea of defence that Mr. Barton has been led to suggest that Naval Brigades at the various ports, subject to a periodical course of drill afloat, would provide a solution of the question. If he had considered the quality of the force which might have to be met—the regular Navies of Russia, Japan and the United States—and the advantages to be derived from fighting out the war in waters remote from Australia, the insufficiency of his suggestion would have been manifest to him.

It is worthy of note that the sole reference to this point in the whole correspondence is a short sentence in the notes made by the Commander-in-Chief on Captain Creswell's report.

It may be that the Ministers have been converted, and have realised the erroneous standpoint from which the question is approached in Australia, but they are not free agents, and are bound by public opinion in that country.

It is therefore of the first importance to get into the public mind that a Navy is not intended primarily for defending anything, but for attacking the ships of the enemy.

The first suggestion, therefore, is that the word *defence* should be carefully omitted in all papers connected with the Australian Naval force, and that the heading in the Navy List attached to the "Katoomba," "Karrakatta," and each of their sister ships, should be changed from "*for the protection of floating trade in Australasian waters*" to "*Additional ship provided under the agreement with Australia*," or omitted altogether, which would be preferable.

The question then for discussion is not the Naval defence of Australia or of its coasting trade, but the strength and organisation of the Naval force required to defeat any hostile Naval force which may reasonably be expected to be found in eastern waters now and in the future.

By the term Eastern waters is meant the waters of Australasia, the China Seas, and the Indian Ocean.

Naval Forces in Eastern waters.

The foreign Powers which have possessions and maintain Naval forces in those seas are—

Russia.
France.
Japan.
United States.
Holland.
Germany.

Russia.

On 15th October 1901 the Russian Naval force in the China Seas consisted of—
5 battleships,
8 cruisers,

besides a number of smaller vessels. The strength of the crews was upwards of 10,000.

This force is a growing one, and in the course of the next few years might be considerably increased if any necessity arose for doing so.

Japan.

On the same date the Japanese Navy consisted of—

6 battleships,

24 cruisers,

besides a large number of smaller vessels. The strength of the Japanese personnel for 1901 was fixed at 27,961.

No great increase can be expected in this force in the immediate future.

The Naval Estimates for 1901–2 are 3,711,526*l.*

Other Foreign Squadrons.

Each of the other foreign squadrons is weaker than either the Russian Squadron or the Japanese Navy, and could not be increased in the event of a war with the British Empire, as their Navies would then probably be fully employed in their own home waters.

Great Britain.

The force which Great Britain maintains on the China, Australia, and East Indies Stations comprised on 15th October 1901—

5 battleships,

24 cruisers,

besides a number of smaller vessels, the whole manned by 17,094 officers and men.

It might be advantageous now to draw a portion of this great force from the principal British possessions in the East, viz.:—

Australia,

New Zealand,

India.

As the struggle for maritime supremacy becomes more acute, it may be absolutely necessary to do so in the future. Our object then should be to prepare the way for drawing additional ships and men from Australia, which will and to the REAL strength of our sea-going squadrons in the East.

Capabilities of Australia and New Zealand.

Australia.

Population, 1899

3,756,895.

The net revenue in 1899 was—

	£
New South Wales	9,973,736
Victoria	7,396,944
Queensland	4,431,470
South Australia	2,714,050
West Australia	2,633,081
Tasmania	943,970
	<u>28,093,251</u>

The shipping registered in 1899 was—

—	No. of Vessels.	Tonnage.
New South Wales	1,000	122,747
Victoria	381	98,801
Queensland	234	22,795
South Australia	335	50,866
Western Australia	165	12,095
Tasmania	200	15,379
	2,315	322,683

Average Tonnage 139.

The Commander-in-Chief states, on the authority of the Minister for Defence, that the cost of maintaining the present Australian local Naval forces is 80,000/., besides their contribution to Imperial funds of 104,548/., or a total of 184,548/. The inhabitants of the United Kingdom contribute about 15s. per head to maintain the Navy; if the Australian contribution were on the same scale it would amount to upwards of 2½ millions. It is not to be inferred from this that the Australian contribution should be fixed at that sum.

New Zealand.

Seafaring Population of Australia and New Zealand.

The Government statist at Melbourne stated on 31st January 1898 that the number of males connected with sea and river traffic, and the number of fishermen in Australasian colonies at the Census 1891, was—

—	Males engaged on Sea and River Traffic.	Fishermen.
Australia, including Tasmania	26,583	2,395
New Zealand	5,927	565
	<u>32,510</u>	<u>2,960</u>

Admiral Pearson reported, 3rd June 1899, that the above numbers were not correct; those furnished to him by the several Governments gave—

Seamen proper	8,912
Fishermen	<u>2,802</u>
	<u>11,714</u>

The maritime resources of Australia and New Zealand are seen to be limited, and are not being developed under the present system of a subsidy to the Imperial Government.

If Australia furnished the same number of men for the Navy relative to the population of Great Britain, her share would be upwards of 10,000, and that of New Zealand would be about 2,000.

The present money contribution falls much below what may be considered the fair share of the Colonies in the financial charge for Naval defence.

No considerable increase can be expected so long as the money is not expended on the development of the maritime resources of Australia and New Zealand, which it is to the interest of the Empire to increase.

It is true that the ships can be more economically manned by crews from home, the experience in the case of a ship of "Ringarooma" class being as much as 10,000*l.* per annum, and for "Royal Arthur" and "Challenger" not less than 25,000*l.* per annum. This would amount to not less than 100,000*l.* per annum for the four ships, which it is proposed should be maintained in commission at the expense of the Colonies.

The new arrangement proposed provides for local Naval development by allotting the old cruisers for the use of the local Naval Brigades. The Naval future of Australia depends largely upon the direction which is given to this force.

The following points would seem to be important:—

1. A portion of the force should be at sea during peace.
2. The ship when commissioned for sea should fly the white Ensign, be under the Naval Discipline Act, and follow the orders of the Naval Commander-in-Chief of the Station on which she happens to be.

The following policy is suggested:—

- (a.) Accept the principle of the increased contribution and the enlarged squadron as partly arranged between the Commander-in-Chief and the Federal Ministry.
- (b.) If the present restriction to the employment of the vessels of the Australian Squadron elsewhere than in Australian waters cannot be entirely removed, press to include the China Seas as well as the Australasian.
- (c.) In making arrangements for the development of the local forces, endeavour to arrange for the two points (1) and (2) above-mentioned.

Minute by Admiral Lord Walter Kerr, 1 April 1902 - PRO: ADM 1/7514, f.283.

The D.N.I., in his well worked out paper has put the very complicated question of Australian Naval Defence, or as he would prefer to call it Offence, in as clear a light as the subject admits of, and the proposals with which he winds up his remarks are practical and to the point.

The question is:— Will the Australian Governments accept them?

The increase in the contribution as proposed is very considerable, viz., - from £126,000 to £395,200, a rise which the labour Members of the Commonwealth Parliaments will not readily accept.

This sum moreover will be increased by the expenses of the maintenance of the local Naval Brigades to which the Australians are much attached and which will be very largely added to if the proposal to man the Katoombas after they have been replaced by newer ships for the purpose of giving sea training to the Brigades is carried out.

I am no advocate of an independent Australian Navy, and trust that it may never be. I foresee great friction and disagreeables if it ever comes about. This may be forced upon us in the future, but it is a long way off at present. The Colonies have neither men nor money to run alone.

The types of ships will have to be considered. The Commander-in-Chief suggests "Royal Arthurs" and "Challengers" neither of these types will be repeated in the Imperial Navy it would not be sound policy to build them for Australia.

The Australian people, even the Ministers although the Commander-in-Chief has done much to enlighten the latter, do not realise the full bearings of the question.

Their feeling is local and insular rather than Imperial, and one not easy to remove.

An enlarged contribution from them, unfettered by conditions, is what we should prefer, and which we would in reality be the best for them, but it is pretty evident that they will not consent to this: the only thing to be done is to get as near to it as we can.

The Commander-in-Chief asks for 4 small ships in addition to those named in his paper, for work among the Islands.

Although by his proposal the ships in commission would be reduced from 11 as now to 10, an increase of 1,400 men is involved, for which provision would have to be made in Vote A of some future Estimates.

There is much in the DNI's paper that would be useful in discussion of the subject with the Australian Delegates when they meet in this country in the summer: it would I think serve a good purpose if he embodied in a short paper the statistics and general views on policy which he enunciates, and which could be given to the Delegates when they arrive. There are several points however that require verbal discussion before such a Memorandum giving the views of the Admiralty, can be drawn up. One question to be discussed is - who would defray the cost of the Katoombas if mobilised for War?

(signed) Walter T. Kerr
1-4-02

"Memorandum on Sea Power and the Principles involved in it".

The importance which attaches to the command of the sea lies in the control which it gives over sea communications. The weaker sea-power is absolutely unable to carry to success any large military expedition over sea. The truth of this is shown by reference to the history of the past.

In ancient times the Greek victory of Salamis threatened the Persian communications across the dardanelles, and doubtless this danger contributed to bring about their retreat into Asia.

The failure of the famous Syracusan expedition was due to the defeat of the Athenian fleet, and had its modern counterpart in the failure of Admiral Graves off the entrance to Chesapeake bay in 1781. In both cases the army had to surrender because its communications were cut. The defeat of Nikias dealt a heavy blow to the supremacy of Athens, and may, perhaps be said to have been one of the principle events which led to her downfall. The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown was the prelude to the independence of the United States.

The main cause of the failure of the expedition of Napoleon to Egypt was the defeat of the French fleet at the Nile, which was the first step towards cutting his communications with France, and the subsequent surrender of the French Army.

On the other hand, the advantages which accrue to the stronger sea-power, after it has won command of the sea, are equally illustrated by historical example.

The fall of Quebec and the conquest of French Canada was mainly due to the fact that our superior sea-power closed the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the French and opened it to us. In any similar struggle in the future, this route will be as vital as in the past.

The expedition to Egypt under Abercromby in 1801, the Peninsular war, the expedition to the Crimea, the South African war just concluded, are all instances of great military enterprises which could only have been carried out by a nation holding command of the sea.

The command of the sea is determined by the result of great battles at sea, such as Salamis, Actium, Lepanto, those which led up to the defeat of the Armada, and those between the Dutch and English in the 17th century, in which each side concentrated his whole available force for the decisive struggle.

To any naval power the destruction of the fleet of the enemy must always be the great object aimed at. It is immaterial where the great battle is fought, but wherever it may take place the result will be felt throughout the world, because the victor will afterwards be in a position to spread his force with a view to capturing or destroying any detached forces of the enemy, and generally to gather the fruits of victory, in the shape of such outlying positions as the New Hebrides, Fijis, Singapore, Samoa, Cuba, Jamaica, Martinique, the Philippines, Malta, or Aden, which may be in possession of the enemy, his shipping and commerce, or even to prosecute such oversea campaigns as those in the Peninsular and South Africa.

Stress is laid on the importance of the great battle for supremacy, because the great development of the navies of France, Germany, the United States, and Russia, indicate the possibility that such battles may have to be fought in the future. It is the battleships chiefly which will have to be concentrated for the decisive battle, and arrangements with this object must be made during peace.

The geographical conditions and the varied interests of the maritime powers prevent such complete concentration in modern times as was practicable in the past. Thus Russia divides her battleships between the Baltic and Pacific; the United States between the Atlantic and Pacific; both Germany and France have concentrated in European waters, where therefore, the greater part of the British battleships are massed, leaving a detachment only on the China Station to "contain" or hold in check any hostile force in those seas while the decisive struggle is being fought out elsewhere.

Our possible enemies are fully aware of the necessity of concentrating on the decisive points. They will endeavour to prevent this by threatening our detached squadrons and trade in different quarters, and thus obliging us to make further detachments from the main fleets. All these operations will be of secondary importance, but it will be necessary that we should have sufficient power available to carry on a vigorous offensive against the hostile outlying squadrons without unduly weakening the force concentrated for the decisive battle, whether in Europe or elsewhere.

The immense importance of the principle of concentration and the facility with which ships and squadrons can be moved from one part of the world to another – it is more easy to move a fleet from Spithead to Cape Town than it is to move a large army, with its equipment, from Cape Town to Pretoria – points to the necessity of a single navy, under one control, by which alone concerted action between the several parts can be assured.

In the foregoing remarks the word defence does not appear. It is omitted advisedly, because the primary object of the British Navy is not to defend anything, but to attack the fleets of the enemy, and, by defeating them, to afford protection to the British Dominions, shipping, and commerce. This is the ultimate aim.

To use the word defence would be misleading, because the word carries with it the idea of a thing to be defended, which would divert attention to local defence instead of fixing it on the force from which attack is to be expected.

The traditional role of the British Navy is not to act on the defensive, but to prepare to attack the force which threatens – in other words, to assume the offensive. On one occasion England departed from her traditional policy, and acting on the defensive, kept her ships in harbour unrigged and unmanned, with the result that the Dutch sailed up the Medway and burnt the ships of war at their moorings.

The strength and composition of the British Navy, or of any British squadron, depends, therefore, upon the strength and composition of the hostile forces which it is liable to meet.

The great increase which is now being made in the strength of the principal navies is shown in the following table, in which all small vessels are omitted:—

	France		Germany		Russia		United States	
	1902	1907	1902	1907	1902	1907	1902	1905
Battleships, first and second class	27	35	13	26	17	25	10	18
Cruisers	47	65	28	43	20	33	26	41
Estimated total personnel required on mobilisation	64,000	78,000	31,800	42,900	45,600	53,000	32,500	48,000
Personnel on active list	51,300	-	33,400	-	60,000	-	33,000	-

The corresponding figures for the British Navy in 1902 are:—

Battleships (first and second class)	44
Cruisers	127
Personnel required to man War Fleet	129,704
Effective Personnel on Active list	113,292

To meet the increase in foreign navies great additions will be required in the immediate future to the British naval force.

The total estimated National Expenditure for 1902–03, exclusive of war charges, amounts to £129,159,000, of which the Navy Estimates account for £31,255,500, or about one-fourth, which is equal to a contribution of 15s. 1d. per head of the population of the United Kingdom. If this were divided equally per head among the white population of the Empire, the charge per head would amount to 12s. 0. 1/4d. For the actual naval expenditure per head in the several parts of the empire, see Appendix A [omitted].

The annual value of British trade, which it is the ultimate object of the Navy to protect, amounted in 1900 to:—

Trade of UK with Foreign Countries	£665,895,000
Trade of UK with British Dominions	£211,555,000
Total trade of the UK	£877,450,000
Total trade of British Dominions with foreign countries and among themselves	£327,500,000

Of this last about one-third is estimated to be inter-colonial.

The ultimate aim of the British squadrons is by the destruction of the ships of war of the enemy to protect British dominions and British trade.

(19)

Private letter from Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Fanshawe to Lord Selborne
- Selborne Ms., 17, f.75.

Commander in Chief,
Australia Station,
23rd April 1903.

Dear Lord Selborne,

I have had a long conversation in my office with Sir Edmond Barton and Sir John Forrest. I find them changeable in their views, surprisingly ignorant, and very much engrossed with party politics; at the same time quite pleasant and polite, and we are on excellent terms. The point uppermost in their minds is, I think, to save money. They want to get rid of the charge for keeping up the obsolete ships "*Protector*", "*Cerberus*" etc. . . .

There is a strong feeling for some kind of local defence that they can call their own, and for some time past this feeling has been crystallising towards a desire for destroyers which cannot go far away, and can operate from their harbours against enemy ships and at certain points of the coast such as inside the Barrier Reef, inside Port Phillip etc.

April 24th.

Since the beginning of this letter Lord Tennyson has informed me that the "passage of the naval agreement through the Commonwealth Parliament is difficult and doubtful unless some feeling for local defence is satisfied in somewhat the way I have indicated" which he tells me he has done by cable today to the Colonial Office asking for six small destroyers in place of, or in addition to, the third class cruiser promised in the agreement. He adds that Destroyers are preferred to Torpedo boats because they can combine to defend certain points of the coast like the Barrier Reef.

I have therefore cabled to the Admiralty today this change on the situation, and recommending that Destroyers be granted to satisfy this local sentiment, and to secure the agreement passing the Commonwealth Government, and that article 5 of the agreement that provides for the permanent force be cancelled, and the Reserves somewhat increased.

The idea of Destroyers had been long germinating [sic]. I recommend granting them, if possible, both because they will undoubtedly promote maritime interest in the most popular form, but also because they are the recognised weapons for the defence of harbours and portions of the coast beyond the reach of torpedo boats.

I consider however that the large annual charge to be saved to the Commonwealth by the disestablishment of the old ships of the local naval forces is a strong argument against the Admiralty being saddled with the cost of maintaining these destroyers. They can hardly be called a local defence force belonging solely to the Commonwealth when not paid for by the Commonwealth. In short I think it reasonable that they should supersede the old ships and be maintained in precisely the same manner as the present local Naval Forces of the Commonwealth. The local

officers and crews will no doubt take some time to learn how to manage destroyers,
but I do not see why they should not succeed after some experience of them.

(signed) Arthur Fanshawe.

(20)

Telegram, Fanshawe to Admiralty, 24 April 1903, on "Commonwealth of Australia and Colony of New Zealand" - PRO: ADM 1/7671,CO28/4/03, f.91.

New Zealand certain to accept Naval agreement as drawn up, but Governor General informs me passing by Federal Parliament very doubtful unless strong feeling for local defence is satisfied. Governor General is asking Home government for Destroyers either in addition to, or instead of, third class cruiser(s). Submit I strongly deprecate reducing number of ships, and suggest to balance percentage on cost of destroyers, if granted article 5 of the draft agreement be cancelled. Destroyers to be maintained and manned by colonies. Admiralty would save about £20,000 per annum wages if article 5 cancelled. Consider that payment to colonials necessarily more than double imperial rates will cause great discontent in other ships, and also consider press and members of parliament will cause much trouble and make mischief with regard to discipline these objections not applicable to reserve which might be [?]. Believe that federal government propose to abandon present ships *Cerberus* &c. and naval forces thereby saving most of the increase in contribution under new agreement. Therefore strongly urge destroyers if sent be manned and paid for by colony. Consider rejection of agreement most deplorable. Therefore submit local sentiment be satisfied. Consider moreover destroyers most suitable for forming local defence.

(21)

Telegram, Lord Tennyson, Acting Governor General, to Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, 24 April 1903 - PRO: ADM 1/7671, f.85.

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence wish me to say that probable passing of Naval agreement difficult and doubtful unless something is done to satisfy strong feeling for local defence, and to allay the fear that the Australian Squadron is not sufficiently strong, and that when the Australian Squadron leaves waters there will be no local defence left to deal with stray vessels of enemy. They therefore suggest that six locally officered and manned small torpedo boat destroyers (one for each capital port, crew and officers to be paid out of £200,000 per annum by the Imperial government) should be substituted for, or be lent in addition to third class cruiser manned from United Kingdom. If they had destroyers they would be maintaining a properly equipped force of vessels which could be used for Defence of Australian Coast. Great Barrier Reef is singularly adapted for destroyers and for these alone. Prime Minister cannot ask Parliament for more opulent subsidy on account of great drought, and he hesitates to apply for destroyers unless he has assurance that it will be favourably received. Two destroyers even, manned as described, would go far to calm popular feeling. Governor of New South Wales and other experts are strongly in favour of destroyers, to be under the control of the Admiral.

(22)

Minute by Prince Louis of Battenberg. DNI, 2 May 1903

- PRO: ADM 1/7671, f.95.

Much could be said on such points as stationing torpedo boat destroyers around coast to destroy torpedo boats operating from bases 4000 miles away; on the obvious impossibility of finding Colonial officers and men to efficiently fill the various special ranks and ratings, which make up a destroyer crew; on the number of RN Officers and men to be locked up in the three drill ships; on the large initial outlay on building the Destroyers—even if the value of one *Mildura* be taken as a set off . . . &c. &c.

The existing Australian agreement has for years been condemned as tying down a portion of the Royal Navy for the so called “defence” of certain localities, in direct opposition to accepted Admiralty policy.

The underlying principle of the agreement about to be laid before the local legislatures is that the whole of these naval forces, towards which Australia is to contribute in money, are free to be employed where the Admiralty think fit, in war.

If these Destroyers are now added as a “Defence Mobile” in the French sense, it can only be taken as an admission that the seagoing fleet is insufficient and that the great principle, on which this new agreement is based, is unsound. . . . These erroneous ideas are not likely to be dispelled if the Governor of a State, who is a flag officer, expresses his approval of such inept proposals as a perpetual Destroyer Patrol in War in the many hundred miles of water inside the Great Barrier Reef.

As regard the 2 telegrams under discussion it will be seen that Lord Tennyson and Admiral Fanshawe are by no means in agreement as to how this new proposal is to be effected.

(23)

Minute by Lord Walter Kerr, 12 June 1903 - PRO: ADM 1/7671, f.153.

The Australian government were left altogether free to maintain or discharge these [local] forces, it was entirely at their option—if they maintain them it would be at their own cost, but whether they kept them or retained them it in no way affects their agreement with the Imperial Government or the amount of the subsidy.

(24)

Private letter, Chamberlain to Selborne - Selborne Ms., Box 34, f.81.

19th July 1903
Colonial Office

My Dear Selborne,

I enclose you part of a letter from Sir John Forrest which please read and let me know what you think of it.¹

If, as I rather anticipate, you cannot consent to his suggestion, will you let me know if there is any kind of concession that you think you can safely make? Remember that Forrest has fought our battle most manfully: not only here but in the colonies he has, in spite of the timidity of his colleagues, again and again put forward the true view of the responsibilities of the Australians and the true nature of Imperial Defence, therefore his opinion is worthy of more attention from us than any other Australian Statesman. Please return the extract when you reply.

Yours very truly,
(signed) Joseph Chamberlain

(25)

Private letter, Selborne to Chamberlain - Selborne Ms., 34, f.34.

Copy [Not dated: c. 20 July 1903]

Admiralty

My Dear Chamberlain,

I return to you Sir John Forrest's letter and its enclosure. I know well what a staunch champion Sir John Forrest has been and I have the greatest respect for his opinion.

I am afraid however that it is quite impossible for me to accede to his suggestion. In fact my views on the question are so clear and emphatic that I would far rather see the Commonwealth started a local navy of its own and that there was no naval agreement than be responsible for one by the terms of which the Admiralty would have to ask leave of the Commonwealth Government to move the Australian squadron from Australian waters in time of war. To speak perfectly frankly, I do not trust the Commonwealth Government or any other Colonial Government in such a matter as this. The principles of naval strategy are necessarily so little understood and there would be so much vague alarm on the outbreak of any naval war that I would certainly not be responsible for the navy in such a war if I had any Government, except my own, to consult as to the movements of the ships. Remember that on the

¹ [The letter from Forrest has not been traced. It is not among Chamberlain's or Selborne's papers. See JC 18/2/12-13-14. Joseph Chamberlain Papers. University of Birmingham Library.]

conjunction of the Australian with the China Squadron at a given moment might depend the issue of the war in the east and that hours might be of vital importance.

There is no question of trusting the Australian admiral and not trusting the Commonwealth Government. The vital point is that the Admiralty be free, not the local admiral, who will not move unless he receives orders from the Admiralty. Even if I knew that I should only have to deal with a man like Sir John Forrest I should not agree, because his hands might be forced just as the hands of the government at home might be forced by an excited public opinion, which could not understand that the only safety on the sea is to sink the enemy's ships wherever they are and to destroy them, and that to localize the ships must be disastrous. But when I remember what kind of politicians may constitute the Commonwealth Government hereafter and that the Labour Party may dominate everything, the importance of the principle for which I have contended and do contend is a hundred fold increased.

I have never forgotten either, but always kept in my mind, the fact that this agreement will be the pattern on which all future agreements, if such ever come into existence, with Canada or South Africa will be modelled. If I had consented to stereotype in this agreement the principle that the navy can be split up into fragments portions of which can only be utilized by the Admiralty where most wanted with the consent of a colonial Government, with whom correspondence at the moment can only be by telegraph and a telegraph liable to interruption, I should have made sure provision that in the future a similar stipulation would be inserted in a Canadian or South African agreement. That the hands of the Admiralty should be to that extent tied in a naval war might have exactly the same effect as if we had voted an addition of a score of ships to the French or Russian Navy.

If either of these groups of colonies ever paid the whole cost of a squadron, however much I should regret it, they would clearly have a right to make their own terms; but in the Australian case, even at the increased amount they will not be paying half the cost of the squadron, and therefore seems to be a far stronger reason for the Home Government to ask the colonial to trust the Admiralty than there is for the Colonial Government to ask the Admiralty to trust them. The sole and only reason why there is any doubt on this subject in the minds of Sir John Forrest and of those in Australia who are much worse informed than he is that the elementary principles of Naval warfare are still so imperfectly understood.

Believe me, yours sincerely.

Selborne.

PART III

1904-1909



*Alfred Deakin, Australian Prime Minister, 1903-04, 1905-08.
(NAA CRS A761111)*



Andrew Fisher, Australian Prime Minister, 1908-09. (NAA CRS 1163211)

Printed copy of letter from Alfred Deakin to the Governor General, enclosed
with letter Deakin to Admiralty, 16 October 1907 - PRO: ADM 1/7949.

Melbourne, 28th August 1905.

My LORD,

As Your Excellency is aware, under an agreement with His Majesty's Government, the Commonwealth contributes five-twelfths of the annual cost of the Naval Force on this Station, whose base is in Australasian Ports, but whose sphere of operations includes the China and East Indies Stations. The protection of Australasia and its commerce, and of great Imperial interests in China and India upon the high seas, are its principal duties in this very extensive area.

The Naval Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir A. Fanshawe, has recently criticised this agreement on several public occasions, in order to support his contention that our contribution, as there fixed, is altogether insufficient. Since as yet only three payments have been made according to an agreement arrived at in 1902, which is to have effect for ten years from 1903, this appeal for an alteration of its terms might be deemed premature. But as it may indicate a dissatisfaction with the agreement shared by the Lords of the Admiralty, as well as by their Official Representatives, and as a similar dissatisfaction, though upon other grounds, exists here, it may be advantageous to commence its reconsideration without delay.

The paramount importance of the Navy to the British Empire and to Australia may be taken as freely admitted. Nothing in this despatch is intended to question it. Indeed, our obligations to share in the general defence of the Empire have been already recognised in practice and in principle. Beyond this, the defence of Australia and its coasts is accepted as a duty and as a necessity of national self-respect. Yet even under these circumstances, the present Naval Agreement is not, and never has been, popular in the Commonwealth. It has been approved only in default of a better means of indicating our acceptance of Imperial responsibilities. Whatever may be the assumed basis upon which our contribution is there determined, it is regarded as merely an arbitrary proportion of an existing expenditure. Whatever the intention may have been, this attempt at joint naval action has failed to enlist a fraction of the support that was spontaneously accorded in all the States to the despatch of military contingents to South Africa.

On this account, the question why the Naval Agreement is coldly regarded here appears serious enough to merit careful scrutiny. There is much truth in the customary interpretation that its want of popularity is due to the fact that, except to the small extent permitted by Articles V., VI., and VII., none of our grant is applied to any distinctively Australian purpose. When the squadron is pointed to as a justification for our subsidy, it must be remembered that a similar squadron, more localised than the present, was maintained prior to our first agreement with the Admiralty in 1887, and would be maintained now if there were no subsidy. What has been obtained by us in return for an annual appropriation has been simply an increase of its strength, coupled with an extension of its sphere of operation.

The British man-of-war and the British seaman awaken enthusiasm whenever they visit our ports because, being English, they are inseparably associated with our race

and history; but the particular squadron supposed to be paid for in part by us is not specially Australian any more than it is Anglo-Indian or representative of the Straits Settlements, to which it may be called at any time. What is really required is that any defences, if they are to be appreciated as Australian, must be distinctively of that character. At present we are without any visible evidence of our participation in the Naval Force towards which we contribute. Our £200,000 a year would seem in part repaid if we were enabled to take a direct and active part in the protection of our shores and shipping. But as we have no identification with the squadron, except in the articles already alluded to, there is so far nothing naval that can be termed Australian, or even Australasian. No Commonwealth patriotism is aroused while we merely supply funds that disappear in the general expenditure of the Admiralty. The Imperial sentiment languishes too, since the squadron is rarely seen in most of our ports, and then only by a small proportion of the population.

Having regard to the obvious lack of public interest upon the part of the people of this county in our present naval defence, several means have been suggested that would assist to awaken and render it deeper and more permanent. An acceptable expedient ought not to be hard to find. The Admiralty probably desires naval and coaling stations in Australia other than those already or likely to be hereafter established at such of our seaports as may be defended by local works, or it may need other accommodation established here that would earmark the moneys expended. There would then be something to show for our contribution, which at the same time would be a real assistance to His Majesty's Navy. Although object lessons of this kind would have a healthy influence, they are not the only, nor, when our remote situation is remembered, are they the wisest means of popularising our grants. They might possibly be criticised as devices for the spending of money upon our own shores, or for local benefit only.

Imperial purposes can be served to which no such objection can be taken, but which would be at the same time of conspicuous value both to the Admiralty and the Commonwealth. Nowhere are maritime communications more important than to Australia, seeing that our dependence upon sea carriage is certain to increase rather than diminish as population and production advance. Our mails, passengers, cargoes, and perishable goods call for cheap and speedy transit outward, which we have not obtained, though that is at least as essential to our expansion as to that of any part of His Majesty's Dominions. Our present oceanic services inward are obviously capable of much improvement, especially those which are in British hands, seeing that in recent years the subsidised vessels of foreign powers have made great inroads upon our trade and traffic.

There is generally understood to be a close connection between the mercantile marine and naval power of any nation, and it has often been suggested that the one might be greatly benefited by closer alliance with the other. What more natural than that this generally recognised relationship should be made use of in our own case. Our need is plain, the opportunity is obvious, and precedents already exist for satisfying our desires, while uniting us with the mother country in the necessary preparations for national defence.

For instance, the agreement between the Admiralty, Board of Trade, Post-Master-General, and the Cunard Company, dated 30th June 1903, and having a currency of 20 years, might be pointed to as justifying a similar arrangement in which we should be partners, providing for the construction of swift steamers, built upon plans

approved by the Admiralty, ordinarily plying to and from Australia, but always available for use as transports in times of need. Both the naval power and mercantile shipping of the Empire would be materially reinforced if the sum at present paid by us towards the local squadron were applied in securing up-to-date ships usefully engaged in commerce during times of peace, but capable of being employed economically and at the shortest notice in times of war. The French and German Governments are understood to have important agreements of this nature now in force.

The establishment of a rapid and regular service of first-class steamers between the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth would confer a great boon upon our producers, upon British merchants, and upon all travellers to and from Australia. It should largely assist to develop trade between the mother country and ourselves. We are now paying a sum of £120,000 a year to the Orient Company for a fortnightly mail service that will in all probability be terminated on 31st January 1908. Taking its character into account, this is an expensive bargain. It is in no sense a substitute for the efficient weekly service between Great Britain and Australia that our mutual interests demand. This we might acquire by combination with the Admiralty, and a diversion of our subsidy to that end.

If any contract to which we are parties were made upon the Cunard pattern, providing for constant steam communication between Great Britain and Australia, conditions could be inserted providing for the selection and partial training of the crews engaged upon them as members of the Royal Naval Reserve. There can be no doubt but that an agreement of this character would be immensely more popular than that which forms the schedule to the Act of 1903. The ships would be always in evidence, their value would be felt, and their purpose a matter of pride. The Naval Forces of the Empire would be at least as much strengthened as by the existing arrangement, quite apart from all the commercial and other advantages of the present proposal.

There are perhaps other schemes for naval co-operation preferred by His Majesty's Government, to which attention ought to be given, but the foregoing is also worthy of careful examination from another point of view.

Australia has admittedly done more than most of her sister dominions in accepting a temporary scheme of naval defence, though confessedly as it stands it is unsatisfactory to us, and, if we may rely upon Admiral Sir Arthur Fanshawe's publicly expressed opinions, to the Lords of the Admiralty too. It is, however, not improbable that other parts of the Empire, which at present accept no share in naval defence would reconsider their attitude in the event of the adoption of a new scheme of this character. If attractive to us, some of it could probably made attractive to them.

No attempt is made at this stage to do more than indicate a general project in outline. Should this preliminary overture be favourably received by His Majesty's Government, it would be a great advantage if a conditional approval of the proposal, or of its further consideration, were expressed by confidential cable at the earliest date possible. The project could then be put in form as a whole, criticised, supplemented, and submitted to examination in all its details.

The resources of the Empire, whether upon sea or land, may be made to minister to its efficiency by direct developments, and by their indirect and reciprocal action. The promotion and enlargement of national co-operation by these means, while conferring greater potencies upon our people, would foster in them a stronger sense of mutual support. Especially should this be the consequence when scattered dominions were

drawn closer together in terms of peace, sharing a prosperity increased as well as sheltered by a far-seeing policy providing for their defence.

Where, as in our case, a world-wide Empire depends for very life upon the efficiency of its Navy, an increase of maritime strength would seem to be one of the sagest methods of its equipment for the grave emergencies of international rivalry. At all events, it is in the hope that the present proposition will be interpreted in the light of these ambitions that it is now respectfully submitted.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Excellency's most obedient Servant,

ALFRED DEAKIN.

His Excellency

The Governor-General.

(27)

Parliamentary Papers on Defence of Australia, No.66. Copy in papers of
Committee of Imperial Defence, 'Australia - General Scheme of Defence', 22
February 1906 - PRO: CAB 38/11/6, f.4.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA (10 OCTOBER 1905)
REPORTS BY CAPTAIN CRESWELL, NAVAL DIRECTOR

(A) IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY MINISTER OF DEFENCE
AS TO THE FORMATION OF AN AUSTRALIAN NAVY; (B) UPON
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE; (C) *RE* SUBMERSIBLES OR SUBMARINES.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
DEFENCE.

Presented by Command; ordered by the House to be printed, 12th December 1905.

REPLIES BY THE NAVAL DIRECTOR TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE
HONORABLE THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE.

1. What the Commonwealth should have in the way of a Navy?

Three cruiser-destroyers, sixteen torpedo boat destroyers, and fifteen torpedo boats first and second class.

Of course, it cannot be expected that these vessels will be provided at once in one year, and the provision will be extended over a period of seven years, at an average cost of £330,000 per annum.

2. Estimated cost?

Cost of vessels, £1,768,000; maintenance of vessels, commissioned and in reserve during seven years, £532,000; total £2,300,000.

3. Cost of up-keep?

£120,000 per annum in peace time, including an addition of 456 to the permanent forces, and 466 to the naval militia.

4. What vessels it is proposed to get first?

Four torpedo boat destroyers and four first-class torpedo boats.

5. What vessels at present in commission could be first dispensed with?

Cerberus to be withdrawn from commission, and to be a depôt for torpedo-boat crews within the Heads.

Queensland gunboats to be re-surveyed, withdrawn from commission, and relegated to such service as may be deemed suitable.

Protector to be re-surveyed and probably used as a tender to gunnery school.

This will provide a defence not designed as a force for action against hostile fleets or squadrons, which is the province of the Imperial fleet, but as a line necessary to us within the defence line of the Imperial fleet—a purely defensive line, that will give security to our naval bases, populous centres, principal ports, and commerce.

Melbourne,

10/10/05.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE.

Report submitted by the Naval Director to the Honourable the Minister of State for Defence.

FIRST AND VITAL REQUIREMENT.

It is necessary to make plain the fundamental principle in any defence, viz., that intelligence of the position, and movements and intention of the enemy, is a vital need. It is as vital to the defences and armed forces of any country as sight to the boxer or swordsman. No matter how expert either boxer or swordsman may be, or how strong in defence, it will be unanimously admitted that, without eyesight, he is under a vital disadvantage. Until actually struck, he cannot tell where or how he will be attacked. This may appear to be a truism too plainly obvious to require statement. It has not been too obvious to save us from absolutely neglecting this fundamental principle in our defence organisation.

LACK OF "INTELLIGENCE" A FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS TO A SEA FRONTIER.

A range of mountains has been declared a bad frontier when the enemy is able to mass his forces secretly on the further side.

A mountain range extending for several hundred miles along a frontier, with all the passes held by the enemy, could only be defended by a hugely preponderating force. Each pass would require in its neighbourhood a force equal to the enemy's full strength. If there were five or ten passes, the defence would require five or ten times the enemy's attacking strength.

With facilities for rapid massing at any point less would suffice for the defence, or, if the configuration permitted, a strong defending force centrally placed, that is, having the interior position, would be able to strike at the enemy after he had *debouched*. On the other hand, with *intelligence* of the particular pass whence attack would be made, there would be required for its defeat a defence but slightly exceeding the strength and numbers of the attack. Intelligence here represents a saving of many thousands of men, and if, the contending forces were approximately equal in numbers, intelligence would furnish the only means of achieving a successful defence.

With a mountain frontier, intelligence is vital. With a sea frontier, it is still more so.

To a defence constituted like the Australian at the present moment, the sea is a more perfect and complete screen to an enemy's movements than even a mountain range with the passes in the hands of our enemy.

Our frontier is several thousand miles in extent, although from Townsville south, about to Perth, is all that need be considered. The defended ports, some nine or ten in number, and some half-dozen others on the sea-board, we may regard as situated within striking distance of passes held by the enemy.

The sea screens the enemy. We have no eyes—no intelligence of his movements. He may attack any of the populous centres or capital ports.

This necessitates *preparation* at all, and a force much greater than the enemy's.

The mountain frontier analogy may now be dropped. Because the *sea* frontier places the defence under still greater disadvantages. The sea is not a mountain range, but an easy road, open to the enemy, which he can pass along at pleasure, but which is denied to us. Whether he will be seen, whether, that is, we shall have intelligence of

his movements, is a matter absolutely under his control. He can screen his movements by keeping a few miles to seaward.

WHAT WE NEED

The addition vitally necessary to our defence is a means of penetrating this screen—of furnishing intelligence, of keeping touch with the enemy, and reporting his position from day to day.

ADVANTAGES ACCRUING

With this power, we shall have—instead of possible panic and preparation at all places, and general uncertainty—a certain knowledge of the position of the enemy, *and probably his intentions will be discovered and anticipated.*

That alone is an immense gain.

Now, supposing, in addition to being the eyes of our defence, the means we employ have power as well to influence the movements of the enemy in a manner very much to our advantage—viz., in this way, that we can compel him to keep miles away from the neighbourhood of our ports in darkness—that is also a great gain, because at night an enemy at present can come close up to the entrances of our ports, and snap up shipping either leaving or attempting to enter. Also, by night the ship can throw shell into a large mark like a town covering several square miles, while a fort cannot hope to hit a ship well beyond the range of the shore search light.

Further, it permits the opening of the port to commerce during the hours of darkness.

WHAT SUPPLIES THE NEED

These great defence advantages we obtain by the employment of a service of destroyers and torpedo defence. Without it, the present defence is a blind defence, and the drawback of a blind defence needs no explanation.

Now, were these alone the gains to our power, they would be sufficient, but there are others of scarcely less moment.

ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES

With destroyers or torpedo boats within striking distance, no force can attempt a landing from vessels. Striking distance may be put down as 100 miles, a distance that destroyers can cover in a few hours.

No force, except a very large expeditionary force with numerous transport steamers, and having with it all that is necessary for land transport, could attempt a landing 100 miles from our ports, and no such force could be sent here while the Empire possesses a Fleet.

We must now consider the defence of our commerce, and, upon its safety, depends the whole business and industrial life of the Commonwealth. The oversea trade of the Commonwealth is approximately from £90,000,000 to £100,000,000 annually. If the intercolonial trade be included, it would, of course, be considerably greater than the latter sum.

If the enemy were sighted, let us say, in the neighbourhood of Perth, to-day, it is certain that the steamers between the eastern States and Perth would immediately cease running. The non-arrival of one or two *en-route* when the news arrived would be the only indication of the enemy's whereabouts. If no further intelligence was received within, say, five days—a matter well within the enemy's control by keeping

off the regular trade route—he would have had time to arrive in Bass Straits, and trade would be stopped between Sydney and Melbourne. Insurance rates in any case would have risen considerably. There would be no indication of his whereabouts, and trade from, say, Adelaide west could not be resumed. A few more days without intelligence, and there would be a cessation practically of all our sea trade. It would be impossible to say off what port the enemy might have placed himself, awaiting to capture entering or departing ships, closing in at night without lights and making sufficient offing to be out of sight before daylight. To the actual and definite intelligence of his presence off Perth would, of course, be added the usual numerous and indeterminable rumours to keep alive public agitation, all conducing to block all business and the general commerce of the Commonwealth, with obvious results to the whole community.

It is strange that a sea trade, said to be greater than that of Spain and Portugal or Japan, valued at £100,000,000, has been left out of consideration in defence schemes. The lack can be supplied by a scouting service and torpedo defence.

Open sea scouting will be provided by vessels of a special class. Destroyers are capable of this service on any sea, particularly our Eastern coasts, under average weather conditions. A large measure of security for sea trade can be effected by destroyers, and this in addition to the services first claimed for them.

Destroyers working from ports can insure that the sea shall be clear of an enemy for a radius of 50 to 60 miles *at night*. As, with superior speed, the destroyer can follow any enemy it may sight during the day, on the chance of attacking him by night, no enemy would elect to be sighted even by day if it opened the opportunity of being followed and attacked at night. The area round ports can therefore be made secure for the *entry and exit* of trade.

Once at sea and clear of the "area of convergence of trade routes," there is comparative safety for the merchant steamer. She can select her course, and the chances of capture are reduced to a minimum.

With high speed destroyers and the short distance comparatively between the main capital ports in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth, the routes could be further secured by an effective patrol, and by destroyer bases at the numerous creeks and sea inlets available only to light draft vessels. An enemy on the inner coast route would be open to attack at a number of points, a fact that would not incline him to remain on the route usually followed by our very considerable coasting trade.

Summary:—

The following are the services rendered by destroyers, and lacking to our present defence:—

- I. Intelligence; and keep touch with an enemy, reporting his position.
- II. Compel attack by day, enabling our fixed defences to meet attack at the greatest advantage.
- III. Make impossible any landing.
- IV. Make safe to our commerce the danger areas in the vicinity of our ports, enabling vessels to enter or leave and gain the open sea.
- V. Enable sea commerce to continue running, and to a great extent prevent the interruption to the general business of the community.

The above render it necessary to establish a destroyer service.

W.R. CRESWELL, Captain,
Naval Director
10/10/05

REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE NAVAL DIRECTOR TO THE HONORABLE
THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

Re submersibles or Submarines.

I do not recommend the purchase of these vessels for the following reasons:—
The vessels and their suitability to the weapon carried must be separately considered.
The only advantage gained is a certain measure of invisibility. The vessels is still in the experimental stage. From the statements of the late chief constructor, Sir W. White. I gather:—

- (1) That the forces acting on submerged vessels have not yet been accurately determined;
- (2) That the design and construction to meet these forces have not yet evolved;
- (3) That modifications are necessary to insure a vessel of trustworthy stability.

Their speed is low, so that it has been said almost complete safety from submarines can be obtained by steaming at a rate of 12 or 15 knots. Radius of action compared with ordinary surface torpedo craft is small.

They are considered as merely supplementary to the surface torpedo craft to approach by day.

Suitability for Whitehead Torpedo

When it is remembered that the Whitehead, used from the surface vessel with every advantage of great speed, ability to select position, and perfect sight, has a margin of uncertainty in action, its use from a vessel of restricted vision and under the disability of the submersible when below the surface will be very much more uncertain. If torpedo boats cannot act by day, their absence is at a time when the land batteries can be most effective.

The cost of each submarine is £150,000.

For this sum, three (3) destroyers could be purchased, giving a range of action equal to any Australian requirement, with all the positive valuable services they can render. The most important of these are denial of our port approaches at night, and that which is *sine qua non* of any defence—keep touch with and transmit intelligence of any enemy.

The same sum would provide six (6) first-class torpedo boats.

The second-class boats I have recommended would give almost the same invisibility as a submarine.

W.R. CRESWELL,
Captain, Naval Director.
15/11/05

(28)

Memorandum, by Captain Charles Ottley on 'Australia – General Scheme of Defence', 1 May 1906 - PRO: ADM 1/8905, f.87-100.

Minute (5 May 1906) by Charles Ottley on 'Australian Government's request for Advice':—

A submission on this question is attached. The Australian Government seek the advice of the British Government regarding the defence of the ports of the Commonwealth as a whole, and amongst the minor issues raised is the question whether some sort of local naval defence in Australian Ports is, or is not, required. This is the point upon which the Admiralty now have to decide.

(signed) CL Ottley.

Minute (8 May 1906) by Sir John Fisher:—

I think the DNI expresses the view we should adopt.
(initialled) JF.

Australian Naval Defence

The Government of Australia have asked the Committee of Imperial Defence to frame a general scheme of defence of the ports of the Commonwealth, in the light of present and future naval developments, adapted to any attacking forces which may reasonably be expected. They add that the scheme of defence should include

- (1) Selection of ports in need of defence,
- (2) Standard of defence of each port, and
- (3) Local naval defence of such ports.

The Committee of Imperial Defence have agreed to undertake this duty, and, in the first place, have referred the question to the Colonial Defence Committee [CDC] for report.

A preliminary discussion of the question accordingly took place at the last meeting of the C.D.C. on 23rd February.

As the representative of the Admiralty on this latter Committee it devolves upon me to make known to its members their Lordship's views on the three headings alluded to by the Australian Government, and I have, therefore, to submit that I have their Lordships' instructions as to the attitude they intend to adopt towards the points raised by the Australian Government.

The first two questions, (1) "Selection of Ports" and (2) "Standard of Defences", present no difficulties, but as regards the third - "Local naval defences of such ports" an acute controversy is now raging in Australia.

On the one hand there is a party in the Commonwealth which stands for a local Australian navy, and on the other there is a party which adheres to the strategic principles inculcated by the Admiralty in favour of a single great Imperial Navy under control of the British Admiralty.

The Admiralty have hitherto consistently held the view that small local navies are necessarily much less efficient than the same aggregate number of vessels enrolled as

units in the British fleet. From my own personal acquaintance with this problem during a three years' commission in Australia, I can vouch for the soundness of this view. As Torpedo-Lieutenant of the flagship it devolved upon me to accompany Rear-Admiral Sir George Tryon (then C. in C. in Australia) in the various inspections he made of the local Australian navies, and I had also to instruct the officers and men, being thus brought into constant touch with them. The ships were inefficient because officers and men though zealous were untrained; for example, the powder-magazines of one of the vessels inspected were found to be full of damp powder. That such defects will always be likely to exist in small navies is, I fear, indisputable. There can be no adequate flow of promotion, no large system of training (the cost of naval training establishments will necessarily prohibit this), no opportunities can exist for giving wide sea-going experience with big fleets, and, unless great expense is incurred, the material cannot be kept up to date.

Added to this is the strategic defect that these local navies are sure to be employed for local defence of Australian ports, which ports are in any case very unlikely to be threatened so long as the Imperial Navy maintains general command of the sea. Moreover the more important Australian ports are defended by formidable batteries, economically manned by small permanent nucleus crews of Australian troops, supplemented in war time by local Militia. We cannot suppose that naval expeditions on a large scale, or, least of all, a great military armada intent on invasion will ever succeed in crossing the Indian Ocean so long as we are in paramount naval strength at the entrance to the Suez Canal and upon the great ocean highways in the North and South Atlantic, and maintain general command of the Indian Ocean.

A raiding cruiser might, indeed, succeed in eluding our vigilance and reaching the vicinity of the Australian Coast. Such a vessel would have two possible objectives. She might either (1) bombard the Australian ports, or (2) prey on British sea trade.

Which course will she select?

No reasonable being can doubt the reply to this question. A raiding cruiser, which wastes her time and her priceless and slender store of shot and shell upon the shore defences when ex hypothesi 4,000 miles from any port at which she can replenish, must be commanded by a maniac.

So long as she remains out of sight of land, she can pursue her depredations on trade with some small prospects of success. But, once let her close to land, and reveal her character by hostile action against Australian territory, and her whereabouts will be known to the British Naval authorities all over the World by telegraph within a few hours, in which case, if our maritime supremacy is not an empty phrase, she would get short shrift. This has been the view hitherto taken by the Admiralty, and the conclusions reached by their Lordships have been communicated to the Colonial Governments in very unmistakable language.

We have accordingly advised the Australian Government to expend any money it desired to devote to naval purposes, not upon a local navy, but as a contribution to the Imperial Navy.

The Commonwealth has latterly accepted this view, and the existing Australian Naval Agreement is the result. Under that Agreement the Imperial Navy receives a subvention of £200,000 per annum and, in return, agrees to maintain a certain fixed number of vessels on the Australian Station, one of these vessels being manned by Australian seamen. Such is the present position of this question.

In November last, however, Mr. Deakin (Premier of the Commonwealth) approached the British Government with a view to an alteration of the terms of the Australian Naval Agreement.

Mr. Deakin pointed out that there was a party in Australia which viewed the £200,000 subvention in the light of "tribute money", and objected to paying it.

He suggested that, in order to meet this objection the £200,000 should instead of being paid to the British Navy, be devoted to some other more purely Australian object, for example, the subsidizing of a fast line of ocean steamers between England and Australia, or the creation and fortification of further naval bases.

To these proposals of the Australian Government the Admiralty have as yet sent no reply.

The request now received from the Australian Government that the C. I. D. [Committee of Imperial Defence] will give them a reasoned scheme of defence of the ports of [the] Australian Continent affords us an opportunity of now once and for all setting out our views on this important question, and making a pronouncement to the people of Australia which shall henceforth direct their very natural desire to defend their territory and commerce towards the policy we deem to be the best.

The main objection from our point of view, to the existing Australian Naval Agreement is that, so long as it holds, we are pledged to maintain in peace, in Australasian waters, the whole of the Imperial Australian Squadron. This is obviously wrong a wrong principle. It is manifestly improper to tie the hands of the Admiralty in such a manner, and fetter our full freedom of action in moving our fleets, even in time of peace.

In time of war it is fair to say however that this disability does not hold. On the outbreak of war we have perfect right even under the present faulty strategic arrangement to move the Australian Squadron to any point in the Far East we may wish. In point of fact, on the warning telegram, the entire Australian Squadron is held ready to concentrate with the China and East Indies Squadrons under the orders of the C. in C. China.

There is, however, nothing in the nature of the Australian Naval Agreement to preclude its being altered at some future date in this particular! If we can only educate Australian opinion on sound naval lines, we should be easily able to convince Australians that their best defence will consist in giving British Admiralty full and unfettered control of the whole of H. M. Ships in Australian waters equally in peace and war.

It is doubtless out of the question to expect the Australians to acquiesce in any proposal to permanently take the British ships away from Australia, and never show the flag in the ports of the Commonwealth. Such an arrangement would quickly kill the sentiment of solidarity of naval interests which it is our chief endeavour to foster. But it is believed that, if not to-day, then certainly within a few years, Australian opinion, adequately guided and wisely led, might readily agree to such a re-constitution of our fleets, as would result in the Australian Ports being visited periodically by a large fleet of cruisers, instead of being, as at present, constantly frequented by the vessels of the relatively weak Australian Squadron.

Although there are signs that educated opinion in Australia is revolting against the proposals of the "local-navy" school.

In a letter published in yesterday's "Pall Mall" (1st. March) Mr. Kelly (one of the ablest Australian M. P.'s), most strongly protests against the idea of a "local Australian navy", and points out that Australians who advocate it are either ignorant of the real merits of the question, or (like Captain Cresswell) must uphold the local navy because, should it be abolished, they will thereby lose their means of livelihood. The Australian Naval Agreement has still 7 years to run. During those 7 years the present agitation in favour of a local Australian navy will very possibly disappear. In the correspondence forwarded by the Governor General of Australia, to the C.I.D. is enclosed a memorandum with respect to the Naval Forces of the Commonwealth drawn up by the Director of the Commonwealth Naval Forces (Captain Cresswell [sic]). This memorandum the Governor begs may be communicated to the Admiralty. The Prime Minister of Australia in a covering letter states that there is a party in the Commonwealth in favour of some action in regard to local naval defence for ports, harbours and coastal trade, and that it is desired that consideration may be given to these matters as the sentiment in favour of the development of the maritime resources of the Commonwealth is one which in the opinion of the Government deserves and will repay encouragement.

Captain Cresswell's proposals contemplate the provision of a separate navy for the Commonwealth, comprising:—

- 3 Cruiser-Destroyers
- 16 Torpedo boat Destroyers.
- 15 Torpedo boats (1st. and 2nd. Class)

the acquisition of this force to be extended over a period of seven years.

As regards personnel he estimates that an addition of 456 will be needed to the permanent forces and 466 to the Naval Militia.

The role of this Navy is described by Captain Cresswell as follows:— "this will provide a defence not designed as a force against hostile fleets or squadrons which is the province of the Imperial Fleet, but as a line necessary to us within the defence line of the Imperial Fleet - a purely defensive line that will give security to our naval bases, populous centres, principal ports and commerce."

The proposals set forth in Captain Cresswell's memorandum appear to be based upon an imperfect conception of the requirements of naval strategy at the present day and of the proper application of naval force, and his memorandum contravenes in two important particulars principles upon which the Admiralty have hitherto laid great stress.

It contemplates in the case of Australia a separate Colonial Navy, and the purely local employment of that Navy as a "defensive line," in fact as a second line for local defence behind the first line of the Imperial Fleet.

But, in order that the naval force at the disposal of the Empire may be used with maximum effect, that force must be one and undivided. An attempt to divide it up by creating one or more local navies will not add to the maritime strength of the Empire but will rather tend to diminish it. Unity of control and unity of training can alone secure that thorough co-operation which is essential.

* Cutting from Pall Mall attached. An even more important pronouncement to the same effect is that of Sir John Forrest, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia (Cutting from "Globe" attached).

Again, defensive employment of naval force is opposed to every sound naval tradition. The very essence of success in naval action is a vigorous offensive. To deliberately adopt the defensive and to organise a naval force to this end is the sign and hall-mark of a weak naval Power.

Australia has no need to adopt this attitude so long as she forms part of an Empire which is the strongest naval Power in the world and which extends her naval protection not only to the Home-land and to her most distant component parts in the farthest seas, but also to all commerce sailing under the British flag.

The desire of the people of the Commonwealth for a local navy is fully recognised by the Admiralty. Such a desire is natural. Australia would naturally regard with pride and satisfaction a navy of her own. But sentimental considerations of this kind have not been allowed to outweigh the bed-rock principles of the art of war on sea and land. The view of Their Lordships has hitherto been that in our Imperial naval organisation a small local Australian navy finds no place.

That the Admiralty do not desire in the smallest degree to discourage Australia, or any other Colony, from active participation in naval defence, but on the contrary wish to encourage such a spirit in every way, is evinced by the existing Naval Agreement. They have however done all in their power to ensure that such participation shall be directed on right and sound lines, calculated both to produce useful co-operation and to implant in the public mind a proper conception of sea power and its application. Captain Cresswell's scheme whatever its opportunist merits, does not appear calculated to fulfil either of these objects.

Whilst the Naval Agreement holds good the proper and best course for Australia is to work on the lines of the Agreement.

The existing Australian floating defences which now consist entirely of obsolete vessels, were originally provided mainly with a view to co-operation in local defence, and according to the last revisions of the various state defence schemes their functions have altered little. Thus in the Queensland Defence Scheme corrected to 1st December 1900 it is stated that the Marine defences "would be generally disposed for the defence of ports, outer roads, and exposed anchorages, and would co-operate with the land defences of these ports.

Similarly in the Victoria Defence Scheme revised to 1899 the "Cerberus" and the torpedo craft are allotted the duties of assisting the forts in the defence of the channels and of engaging any ships that might force their way through the mine-field.

According to the South Australia Defence Scheme revised to June 1896, "the 'Protector' will take up such a position as may be deemed best for the protection of commerce and to resist attack upon any portion of the Colony, to act in conjunction with the local forts &c".

As the Australian ports have already been provided with more or less modern artillery, and the armaments are now about to be again revised, the maintenance of these obsolete naval defences is no longer required. The exclusion of hostile vessels from the Commonwealth harbours can safely be left to the fixed defences unaided.

We have in the past hesitated to recommend the extinction of local naval forces, mainly on the ground that it was undesirable to discourage the inclination shown by Australians for service afloat, as evinced by the popularity and efficiency of the naval Brigades.

This objection has now been removed, and the hope expressed in clause 9 of C. D. C. Memorandum No. 254 M., "that some means might be found of giving effect to the

desire in Australia to make some contribution in men as well as in money to the naval forces of the Empire, has been realised by the existing naval Agreement."

To sum up:

In view of the circumstances of (1) Australia's geographical position, unapproachable by any European Power except across thousands of miles of sea, (2) her sparse revenue, (3) of her relatively small population and of (4) its slow growth: the case for a local naval defence of the Australian Harbours cannot be upheld from the point of view of strategic principle, whatever may be the merits of the question from the political and opportunist Australian standpoint.

Against these broad strategical considerations there must be weighed the sentimental desire of a section of the Australian people for a local navy. This desire is fostered firstly by the Irish element in the Commonwealth (about 20% of the whole population) then by a section of the Labour Party, and thirdly by the officers and men of the Australian local naval forces, who naturally spare no pains in agitating against the abolition of the flotilla, upon the continued payment of which their livelihood depends.

None of these elements have hitherto adduced any valid or convincing arguments from the point of view of naval efficiency in support of their views, but it is possible that, as a measure of policy, and with a desire to accede to a popular cry, the Australian Government might wish to create some sort of local navy.

It is submitted that I may be informed of their Lordships' views on this important question, and more particularly as to whether it is the wish of the Board that we should adhere to the attitude we have hitherto taken up regarding the Australian Naval Agreement, or whether we should now encourage the Australian Government to create a local navy.

In conclusion I would observe that, as it is understood that the Australian Government are anxious to have the reply of the C. I. D. to the questions they have asked, in the course of the next two or three months, it is very necessary that there should be no delay in formulating the Admiralty views.

The whole question of the relationship between ourselves and the self-governing Colonies as regards naval defence, will doubtless sooner or later demand earnest attention. It is manifest that, in the distant future, as the revenue and population of Australasia, Canada, and the South African Colonies quadruples, the disability under which all British colonial communities at present labour, as regards the upkeep of local fleets, will largely disappear.

If, side by side with this increase in population and wealth, there grows up in the self-governing colonies a popular demand for local navies, it will be both impolitic and impracticable for the Mother Country to run counter to it.

The question we now have to decide is whether the tentative proposals just received from Australia are to be regarded as definitively raising this immensely important issue.

If the answer to this question be in the affirmative, we still have to ask ourselves whether it is expedient for the Admiralty to express concurrence in Australia's demand for a local navy. The function of the Admiralty, as such, appears to be to place at the disposal of the Government a sound opinion on the question from its technical and naval aspects.

The aspect of the question from the political point of view must be one upon which the Cabinet should decide.

To Australia the development of the naval and military strength of Japan is a potential menace in the distant future. In an armed struggle between the Commonwealth and Japan, the latter holds every winning card. She starts with a population ten times as great as Australia, with a war-organization more efficient, with material resources the future development of which is at least as secure, and with a birth-rate far greater. Do what she will, neither to-day nor in the future can Australia, single-handed, hope to hold her own against Japan.

It is, perhaps, to Australia's implicit recognition of this disquieting feature in her position in the family of states, and to the fact (of which she cannot but be aware) that between her and possibilities of foreign aggression stands nothing but the might of the British Fleet, that we are to partly attribute the step she has now wisely taken in asking the advice of the British Government

C. L. Ottley
1.5.06

(29)

Extracts from Minutes of Committee of Imperial Defence, 25 May 1906
- PRO: CAB 38/11/23.

COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE
MINUTES OF THE 88TH MEETING, 25TH MAY, 1906.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH states that, in regard to the naval aspects of the defence of Australia, the views expressed were those of the Board of Admiralty. The Board were strongly of opinion that the establishment of a separate Australian Navy was open to many objections. They recognised, however, that there was a political aspect to the question, and that sentiment must be considered. If the Government of Australia decided to take steps in the direction of a local navy, the Admiralty were very decidedly of opinion that such a force should take the form of ocean-going destroyers.

Minute by Captain Ottley on 'Australian Naval Defence: Effect on working of Naval Agreement', 12 December 1906 - PR(O): ADM 116/1241B, f.214.

The C. in C. Australia forwards a copy of a letter recently written by him to the Governor General of Australia, dealing with certain points on the Australasian Naval Agreement which he would wish to see modified. He hopes that this letter will be approved by their Lordships, as being in accordance with their expressed views in M.01083 (attached).

A review of the whole question brings into prominence the points summarised below:—

(1) On M.01083 their Lordships expressed the view that the Imperial Service would, on the whole, gain rather than lose, by the abolition of the Australasian contribution (which is limited to a maximum of 240,000 per annum) if such abolition left them free to reduce the number of vessels on the Station to bare strategical requirements.

(2) There appears to be no doubt that there is a considerable dissatisfaction in Australia with the way in which the Imperial Navy has carried out its part of the Agreement. This dissatisfaction arises principally from the delay experienced in filling the higher rates in ships manned by Australasian (under the terms of the agreement) from among Colonial lower ratings. The delay has been inevitable, owing to the men not being fit to fill the higher non-substantive ratings. (In this connection it may be noted that approval has been recently given for the training of certain selected Colonial ratings in the (G) and (T) Schools at Portsmouth.

(3) The Australian Government now wishes to build certain Torpedo Craft for local defence, and would doubtless be glad to escape the burden of their contribution to the Imperial Navy.

(4) The manning of these Torpedo Craft by Australia will present serious difficulties unless the men can be trained in the Imperial Navy.

Under these circumstances the C. in C. suggests that the Naval Agreement should be so far modified as to admit the drafting of Australian ratings (required under the Agreement to man one 2ND class Cruiser and three drill ships) to the local Torpedo Craft, after completing such a course of training in the Imperial Navy as may be desirable: thus annulling that part of the agreement under which the Australasian are to man the four ships specified,—but, it is for consideration whether it is not somewhat premature to engage in any further correspondence upon these questions of detail, until the broad outlines of the policy to be pursued in future with regard to the Australian Agreement are more clearly defined.

C.L.Ottley.

Minute by Captain Ottley on 'Australian Defence Policy', 12 December 1906

- PRO: ADM 116/1241B. f.374.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY

Enclosed with the Commander-in-Chief's letter of 16th October (m.01430) are a series of Australian Parliamentary papers shewing the latest developments of the question of the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth. The following summary will perhaps be of interest to Their Lordships.

On receipt of the Report by the Committee of Imperial Defence on a "General Scheme of Defence for Australia" the non-confidential portion of the report was published as a Parliamentary paper. At the same time two committees, composed, one of local naval officers and the other of local military officers, were appointed by the Government to consider the C.I.D. report.

For a body of officers of the local Australian Navy to have recommended the abolition of the force from which they draw their livelihood, would have argued almost superhuman altruism on their part. So far as I can ascertain, the Australian Government has never held out any hope to these officers that (if the local Australian Navy is abolished) they will receive any sort of retiring allowance, pension or any pecuniary acknowledgment whatever of the fact that their occupation would thereby be gone. Surely, therefore, the inference is clear that, when the Australian Government called upon the Commandant of the local Australian Navy to report upon the C.I.D.'s recommendation that the Navy should cease to exist, it was putting to Captain Creswell an unfair dilemma.

As might have been expected the committee of local naval officers reported adversely to the suggestion that the local navy should be abolished. Their report contains a lengthy and detailed criticism of the C.I.D. report. Though specious and well calculated to take the fancy of a public very superficially versed in naval matters, the local naval officers' report is based on a narrow conception of naval strategy and bristles with misleading statements and false deductions. Thus a speech by Mr. Balfour advocating the use of destroyers for the defence of the British Isles is quoted as an argument for the creation of a similar force in Australia. The difference between the correct strategy which localises the employment of destroyers in British Home Waters, where they are at all times within easy striking distance of the foci of naval activity of our potential enemies, and the strategical error implied in stationing vessels of this type in Australian Harbours 4,000 miles from the nearest foreign naval base, is to the "local naval officers in Australia" apparently a matter of insignificance.

The report of the military officers has no special interest for the Admiralty, though it is worthy of notice that they question the power of the Navy to prevent the possibility of a raid on Australia on a large scale.

Other papers enclosed by the Commander-in-Chief contain in tabular form a summary of the various schemes both naval and military which have been proposed for the defence of Australia.

At present the Commonwealth Government has not announced the definite adoption of any of these schemes, though, in a speech delivered on 26th September 1906 the Prime Minister indicates that the local navy scheme will eventually be adopted without ceasing the contribution to the Imperial Navy. He states, however, that "an election

must intervene, and a new Parliament must be returned, before any appropriation can be made for giving effect to the scheme which I have outlined". These elections are now in progress.

Apparently no good purpose would be served by any detailed criticism of these reports at the present stage. The Commonwealth Government have placed both sides of the question before the public, and it is for them to decide what course is to be adopted. Regarding these reports, therefore, it is submitted to take no action.

A submission dealing with the whole question of policy with regard to the Australian naval agreement will be put forward in due course.

C.L. Ottley

Minute (20 December 1906) by Sir John Fisher on above:—

Concur.

Minute (22 December 1906) by Lord Tweedmouth on above:—

Concur.

(32)

Minute by Alex Flint (Head of 'M' [Military] Branch) on 'Naval Agreement, 1903: Suggested Alterations', 28 December 1906
- PRO: ADM 116/1241, f.299.

DNI.

Regard being had to the views of the Colonial Office expressed in their letter of 28th April 1905 (m0555/05 in attached papers) it cannot be expected that the proposal by the C-in-C Australia for the Policing of the Islands by ships manned by Australasians would be now accepted by the Colonial Office. That Department will be supported too by the Foreign Office as regards the New Hebrides, in view of the Imperial responsibilities Great Britain has undertaken in the recent convention with France.

Whilst it might be maintained that the 4 ships to be manned by Australians and New Zealanders are part of the Imperial Navy, this argument will probably not have weight with the Colonial Office who have to consider the views of the Islanders who will doubtless protest against Australian influence in the form of ships manned by Australians patrolling their waters: the "weakening" of purely Imperial influence will it may be expected be strongly opposed. Further, inter-colonial jealousies of Australia and New Zealand (say, in Fiji) would be accentuated by the rivalry in the part of these Governments to have Australia-manned ships or the New Zealand-manned ship as much as possible in Fiji waters.

The whole relationship of these 4 ships to the Colonial Governments and to the Imperial Government bristles with difficulties, especially in the matter of control of their movements amongst the islands. As regards surveying work of the local coasts, the same objection might not exist but an Australasian Force limited to survey work would provide a comparatively unattractive career – perhaps also scarcely enterprising enough – for Australasian recruits.

Referred.

Alex Flint.

For Head of M.

Received at the Admiralty 10 December:- 'Report of Committee of Naval Officers of the Commonwealth', 12 September 1906
- PRO: ADM 116/1241B, f.234.

p.14

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA
SUBMITTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF NAVAL OFFICERS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH.**

43. We consider that the measures to be taken for the defence of Australia against raiding attacks of four unarmoured cruisers may be divided into five heads, viz.:—

- (1) Defence of trade routes.
- (2) Defence of principal ports
- (3) Defence of minor ports.
- (4) Defence against landing parties.
- (5) Defence of cables and communications.

(1) DEFENCE OF TRADE ROUTES.

44. The Memorandum of the Committee of Imperial Defence indicates very clearly the policy of the Admiralty, and the action which will be taken by the Imperial cruiser squadron in the protection of floating trade.

The Memorandum states that concerted action will be taken for direct pursuit of commerce raiders. The squadron will endeavour to "intercept them at obligatory points of passage and off hostile or even neutral ports at which they are likely to call", but the possibility of raiders evading the cruiser squadron is admitted, and we consider that it is necessary, in order to protect the floating trade of the Commonwealth in time of war, to institute an efficient patrol of the south-west, south, and east coasts of the continent.

We are strongly of the opinion that, in order to be efficient, this patrol duty demands the employment of vessels capable of keeping the sea at all times and in all weathers, and consider that, to meet these conditions, there are required:—

Three ocean-going destroyers - displacement 1,300 tons: speed, 33 knots:
and

One ocean-going destroyer - displacement, 800 tons: speed, 30 knots.

These vessels should be fitted with Wireless apparatus to enable them at all times to communicate with stations established on shore, and also with each other. This will aid rapid concentration.

(2) DEFENCE OF PRINCIPAL PORTS.

45. The Committee of Imperial Defence make recommendations for the defence of these ports, and we consider that, so far as fixed defences are concerned, these recommendations are sufficient to meet the attack already accepted. We, however, are strongly of opinion that fixed defences only are of small value for the defence of ports at night, and this is especially the case at Port Phillip Heads and Sydney.

At these places, the efforts of the garrisons will be limited to a period of seventeen minutes—that being the time that a vessel of fair speed will remain within the radius

of the searchlights provided. This estimate presupposes that the garrison will always be ready to open fire the instant a hostile cruiser appears within the beam of a searchlight, and without waiting for the formalities demanded by regulations governing the Examination service. It also takes no account of the total extinction of the electric searchlights by the enemy's fire.

We consider that, under these circumstances, a raiding cruiser could run past the fixed defences and take up a position of absolute command of these large and important cities.

This condition renders necessary a mobile torpedo defence, and the following are recommended:—

Sixteen coastal destroyers—550 tons displacement; 26 knots.

Four 1st class torpedo boats.

46. We consider that the provision of these vessels, with their suitable disposition, would also efficiently meet—

(3) Defence of minor ports;

(4) Defence against landing parties;

(5) Defence of cables and communications;

and their rapid concentration and mutual support is easily attainable.

DISTRIBUTION OF VESSELS IN TIME OF PEACE.

47. It is proposed that one ocean-going destroyer, 1st class, and one ocean-going destroyer, 2nd class, shall, in time of peace, be kept in commission with a full permanently-employed crew.

Three destroyers to visit in turn the various States, when the vessels in reserve in these States would be mobilised for training purposes.

The remaining destroyers, 1st class, would be kept in ports having docking facilities, with very reduced crews.

Fremantle:	One coastal destroyer will remain in full commission; one of the same class in reserve.
Port Adelaide:	One coastal destroyer in commission, and three in reserve.
Melbourne:	One coastal destroyer in commission, and three in reserve.
Sydney:	One coastal destroyer in commission, and three in reserve.
Brisbane:	One coastal destroyer in commission; one coastal destroyer and four 1st class torpedo boats in reserve.

Every opportunity will be taken to mobilise and exercise these vessels in organised units.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE.

48. The provision of these vessels will entail an expenditure of £2,250,000, which we recommend should be spread over a period of five years (Appendices B and D)[omitted].

ORDER OF PURCHASE.

49. We recommend that, during the first two years, the following should be built in England at a cost of £930,000:—

One ocean-going destroyer, 1st class.

One ocean-going destroyer, 2nd class.

Six coastal destroyers.

Two 1st class torpedo boats.

50. The remainder should be built in Australia.

We estimate that a period of two years will be required by the ship-builders in Australia to raise capital, organise their shipyards, import plant, and instruct their workmen.

The instruction of the workmen can best be accomplished by sending them to England actually to work on the vessels ordered. It should, therefore, be a condition of contract that the English contractors shall receive a number of Australian mechanics into their shipyards for this purpose.

We are of the opinion that, in order to induce the ship-builders in Australia to make preparations for building vessels of the class proposed, a definite scheme should be agreed to, *i.e.*, it should be decided that a fixed sum is to be expended on ship-building within a fixed period.

In the estimates for the years after the first two, the English prices have been given, as it is considered that any increase in cost due to these vessels being built within the Commonwealth should not be a charge against defences, but should be regarded as a subsidy or bonus given for the initiation of an important industry, that of ship-building, calculated to be of immense benefit to the trade of the Commonwealth.

ANNUAL COST OF MAINTENANCE WHEN FLOTILLA COMPLETE.

51. The annual cost of maintenance, manning, stores, &c. of vessels proposed is estimated at £167,970 (Appendix C) [omitted].

This sum, it is calculated, will suffice for a personnel of 882 Permanent Force, and 1,128 Militia. A margin of 15 per cent. Naval Militia over those actually required for manning the vessels has been allowed.

52. Tables showing details of cost and personnel, together with proposals for the number of vessels to be built each year, are attached (Appendices B to E) [omitted].

53. We would point out that, without a Naval Defence Force, the presence of a raiding squadron on our coasts would lead to the mobilisation of all Military forces, the cessation of all shipping trade, and the consequent industrial paralysis, which would cost the country at the lowest estimate £1,000,000 a week, or in a month of war conditions, a sum greater than the proposed capital cost of an adequate naval defence and its maintenance for five years.

54. We consider that, at the end of five years, the vessels in use at present will be of no value either for defence or training purposes, and recommend that they be then sold out of the Service.

SUITABILITY OF VESSELS FOR AUSTRALIA WHICH HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM IMPERIAL SERVICE.

55. The vessels of the *Katoomba* class, if sound and in good order, would be suitable for training Reserves and Cadets, but they are old and likely to be costly for repairs, and their acquisition by Australia is not desirable. The proposals herein put forward for the creation of a sea-going flotilla of the destroyer class will provide within two years the fullest and most modern facilities for the training of Reserves and Cadets.

CONCLUSION.

56. In the above Report, we have confined ourselves to measures in our opinion necessary to meet Australian requirements. These, we believe, will make for our

welfare, and afford the largest degree of self-dependence as an outlying portion of the Empire. We sincerely hope that the results of our work will be of assistance to the Government in considering the vital question of Australian Defence.

W.R. CRESWELL, Captain, Director of the Naval Forces,	} President
C.J. CLARE, Captain, Naval Commandant, C.N.F., South Australia,	}
F. TICKNELL, Captain, Naval commandant, C.N.F., Queensland,	}
WM.J. COLQUHOUN, Commander, C.N.F., Victoria	} Members.
F.H.C. BROWNLOW, Commander O.C., C.N.F., New South Wales,	}
W. CLARKSON, Engineer Commander, C.N.F., Victoria,	}

Memorandum by Captain Ottley on M.0149/07, 27 February 1907
- PRO: ADM 116/1241B, f.435.

Admiralty views on the working of the Australian Naval Agreement

Prior to the Colonial Conference of 1902 a "Memorandum on Sea-Power and the principles involved in it" [Document 18] was prepared by the Admiralty. As a statement of strategic principles this Memorandum cannot well be improved on and were it possible now to revert to the situation of 1902 before the Naval Agreement was concluded it does not appear that the first half of the Memorandum would require any alteration. The latter part of the Memorandum, however, which deals with the incidence of the financial burden of Naval Power on British and Colonial taxpayers and the comparative interest which Great Britain and the several Colonies have in the maintenance of the different squadrons stationed abroad, appears, in the light of fuller information and further consideration, to be a superficial and incomplete examination of a very complicated financial question which mars the effect of the admirable statement of the strategical problems with which the Memorandum opens.

The Agreement which resulted from the 1902 Conference has in spite of considerable administrative difficulties been loyally carried out by all parties and although the Admiralty are fully aware of its many defects they would not of their own initiative have proposed its termination or modification; but Australia having proposed that the terms be reconsidered at the coming Conference, it is now necessary that the Admiralty views should be fully and frankly stated.

That a single Imperial Navy under one control is the most efficient and economical means of maintaining the "pax Britannica" on the high seas is now generally admitted and at first sight it would seem desirable that all parts of the Empire should contribute a just proportion of the cost of upkeep of the ships, and supply a due quota of the men required to man them.

The question however cannot be reduced to these simple terms; there are many other factors which cannot be ignored.

Under present conditions ships can be constructed and manned far more cheaply and efficiently in Great Britain than any other part of the Empire and it therefore follows that nearly the whole sum required for the maintenance of materiel of the Navy is and must be expended in this country; to ask the Colonies to contribute their due proportion would therefore be unjust, and would practically amount to a tribute paid by them to the Mother Country.

Even supposing that the above objection to an equal incidence of taxation did not exist such a method of raising the necessary funds is quite incompatible with the principle of unity of control, which is considered to be absolutely essential to the fighting efficiency of the Navy.

There is practically no difficulty at present in manning the navy in peace or war from British sources and there is therefore no necessity to ask for Colonial assistance in providing either Active Service or Reserve men especially as the Colonial seamen are much more expensive, very far removed from the storm centre of naval danger and can never be trained so efficiently as the men enlisted at home. The only reason for the

enrolment of Colonial R.N.R. men in the past has been the desire to foster Colonial interest in the navy and to develop the maritime interest of the Colonies.

The economic objections to the Imperial Navy paid for by Imperial contributions and manned partly by Colonial seamen would seem unanswerable and it is thought that the common end of uniting the forces of the Empire against foreign aggression can be better attained by other measures which would not involve invidious financial transactions between the Colonies and the Mother Country.

The still recent experience of the South African War affords convincing proof that the Colonies will rally to the defence of the Empire in the hour of need and the help they then gave shows clearly that though unable to lend material naval aid they will be able to give invaluable military assistance to Great Britain.

There is not a little to be said for adopting the policy of a tacit agreement that the whole burden of Naval preparation for war should be borne by Great Britain alone in exchange for the assumption by the Colonies of the obligation to train sufficient military forces to assist the British Army in the protection of Imperial interests throughout the world.

There would be little objection to such a policy if we could be sure that none of the Colonies would ever under any circumstances desire to sever their connection with the Mother Country. While there is no reason to anticipate such a contingency it is not for Great Britain to assume responsibility for it; the strength of the Imperial bonds lies in their being elastic and voluntary and it is inconceivable that, should Canada or Australia desire to withdraw from the Empire, such a wish would ever be opposed by force of arms. The Colonies desire, and rightly desire, to preserve their autonomy, and a purely dependent position in regard to naval power is incompatible with their healthy development as semi-independent states.

Australia has already a small nucleus of Naval Militia and desires to develop the local naval defence, other colonies may follow her example and whatever opinions may be held in this country as to the fighting value of such local navies and the economic and administrative difficulties attendant on their development it is clear that on broad Imperial grounds the Admiralty having given their advice on the specific subject of naval strategy should not seek to further oppose the legitimate Colonial aspirations to naval power.

Before discussing definite proposals for future policy it will be as well to examine the difficulties which have attended the working of the 1902 Agreement.

The Agreement which as originally arranged was to remain in force for a period of 10 years recognises in the preamble "the necessity of a single navy under one Authority, by which alone concerted action can be assured", but proceeds in Art. I to limit that Authority by laying down the numerical force of the different classes of ships to be maintained on the Australian station, all of these to be of modern type except those used as drill ships.

It is plain that Art. I is diametrically opposed to the fundamental policy of a peace distribution which can be varied, if necessary, to meet the strategical needs of the moment.

No account is taken in the Agreement of the future progress of naval construction and consequently the decision of the Admiralty in 1904 to discontinue the employment in peace of slow sloops, which would be practically useless in war, necessitated negotiation with the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for a change in the character of the vessels to be employed on the station.

At the date of the Agreement the strength of the Russian naval forces in the Pacific necessitated the maintenance of a squadron of battleships in China and a considerable squadron of Cruisers in Australia to meet the possibility of Russian aggression. On the Russian defeat at Tushima the battleships were at once withdrawn to reinforce the Fleet in Home Waters, but the Agreement forbids any modification of the Australian force, and consequently the British tax-payer is compelled to pay for the support of a squadron in Australia part of which at least could be better employed nearer home.

It was also agreed that the three drill ships and one other vessel should be manned by Australians and New Zealanders, and that, in addition, a Reserve force consisting of 25 Officers and 700 men should be raised and trained, but no mention was made of the existing Colonial forces which have continued their separate existence and organisation notwithstanding the vital principle enunciated in the preamble of establishing "one navy under one authority".

The Colonial forces on the 30th June 1906 consisted of 171 "Permanent forces" and 907 Naval Militia and the attraction of service in these local corps has proved a serious obstacle to recruiting the Active Service and Reserve men required to be enlisted by the Admiralty under the terms of the Agreement.

Article V lays down that the three "drill ships and one other vessel shall be manned by Australians and New Zealanders as far as procurable, paid at special rates"; the length of time required to convert untrained men into responsible Naval Petty Officers, and to train them to take charge of auxiliary machinery and perform the many responsible technical duties necessary to a modern man-of-war has hitherto prevented the complete realisation of this intention, and it has been found impossible to avoid the retention of a proportion of British Petty Officers and men in these four ships to fill those positions for which no Colonial seamen are available. This has unfortunately led to an impression amongst a certain section of the Australian public that the Admiralty are neglecting to enlist the full numbers of Colonial seamen required by the terms of the Agreement.

The numbers required are,-

Active Service men - 879, Reserves - 725,

of which only 600 and 351 respectively have, at present, been enrolled.

The deficiency of Active Service men consists of "higher ratings" whose duties the Colonial seamen are not as yet sufficiently trained to perform; as time goes on this deficiency will perhaps be made good, but owing to the lack of facilities for training in the higher branches of a seaman's duties, there are strong grounds for the belief that the provision of "higher ratings" will always prove a difficulty which would certainly be increased by the proposed extension of the local Colonial forces, to engage in which the Imperially trained seamen would naturally be attracted at the termination of their 5 years engagement.

The higher rates of pay to Colonial seamen serving in the same ship, and the same messes, with British seamen who, though performing more responsible work, only receive the ordinary British rates of pay, has always been a source of difficulties upon which there is no necessity to enlarge; regarded as a temporary evil this objection has been accepted and the British Officers and men have made the best of it, but it cannot be suffered to continue indefinitely. The expedient of paying the excess wages into Banks has failed, but it is possible that a system of deferred pay proposed by Vice-Admiral Sir W.H. Fawkes may be accepted by the Colonial Governments and prove to be a satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

Notwithstanding the many objections to the Agreement of 1902 the Admiralty have always tried to make the best of it and are prepared, if necessary, to continue to fulfil their obligations until its expiration in 1913, but the Commonwealth Government having now proposed that its provisions should be re-considered, their Lordships would offer their opinion that the Agreement of 1902, being based on incorrect principles, is incapable of satisfactory modification.

The Admiralty therefore propose -

I. That the Agreement should be terminated.

II. That the obligation to maintain any particular number of ships on the Australian Station should cease. Some undertaking on the part of the Admiralty would probably be required that Australian ports would be visited at intervals and this would be unobjectionable.

III. The present subsidies should cease, no subsidies being accepted in future to which conditions limiting the authority of the Admiralty are attached.

IV. While adhering to their previously expressed opinion that Imperial interests can be most efficiently and economically served by "one navy under one authority", the Admiralty would not oppose the legitimate aspirations of the Colonies to maintain naval forces under their own control.

V. The force of Colonial seamen now enlisted for service in the Imperial Navy and Colonial Naval Reserve to be amalgamated with the local Colonial forces: the Admiralty would continue at the request of the Colonial Governments to embark Colonial Seamen for training and service in any of HM Ships employed on the Australian Station. These men to be paid by Colonial funds, but when embarked to receive British rates of pay only, the difference between British and Colonial rates being treated as a deferred payment.

Colonial Seamen when embarked in HM Ships should be liable for service in any part of the world in peace or war, but should be discharged at Australian ports on the termination of their period of service in the Imperial Navy, when they would revert to the Colonial force and be available for service in the local flotillas.

VI. The Admiralty to further in every way in their power the establishment and development of the New Colonial navies viz., - by lending Officers and men as instructors, training Colonial seamen at the request of the Colonial Governments and affording them advice and help in ordering and obtaining material.

VII. To discuss with the Colonial Governments the functions and status of the Colonial Naval forces, and the possibility of utilising them to assist in the Pacific Islands patrol duties under the orders of the Naval Commander-in-Chief and for the survey of Australian waters.

Although Australia may be ready to agree to these proposals as furthering the provision of a naval force of their own, it is improbable they will be equally acceptable to New Zealand, which Colony does not desire to create a local navy and is suggesting increased contributions to Naval funds; there will undoubtedly be some difficulty in finding a solution of the question which will be equally acceptable to all parties. Still if the two larger partners to the Agreement are decided on the desirability of terminating it, it will be difficult for New Zealand to insist on its being carried out in its entirety.

(signed) C.L.Ottley, 27.2.07

(35)

**Minute by Captain Ottley on 'the Australian Naval Agreement', 27 February 1907. Submitting a Draft Telegram to C-in-C Australia on the subject
- PRO: ADM 116/1241B, f.419.**

With reference to the attached correspondence, a draft telegram is submitted which, - if approved - might form the basis for a telegraphic communication to be sent forthwith to the C-in-C Australia.

In compliance with the 1st Sea Lords minute of the 8th instant, a memorandum is submitted (on the basis of Admiral Fawkes' letter of 4th Jan 1907)

In this memorandum endeavour has been made to indicate the general policy which it is submitted the Board might adopt on the question of Local Colonial Navies, and in particular as regards the Australian Naval Agreement.

But it must be plainly understood that this policy is a diametrical volte-face from the attitude the Board adopted at the last Colonial Conference. The justification for this volte-face is of course to be found in the two facts - now fully admitted:— viz.: (1) That the existing Australian Agreement is objected to by Australians; and (2) That it is open to cavil from the point of view of the Admiralty.

A decision should be given as early as convenient upon the question of the officers to be selected to represent the Admiralty at the forthcoming Conference.

If any preliminary Admiralty Committee is to be appointed to consider the questions raised, there is not much time to spare, as the Conference is, it is understood, to meet very shortly.

The special experience of Captain Tudor (recently in command of Challenger and now serving at Admiralty) may perhaps be useful on any such a committee.

C.L. Outley, 27:2:07.

Minute (20 March 1907) by Naval Secretary:—

Approved by First Lord and sent on.

'Extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of the Colonial Conference 1907
relating to Naval Defence', pp. 128–130, W Branch copy
- Admiralty Library, London

Speech by Lord Tweedmouth, fifth day, 23rd April 1907.

... [W]hat I have in the first place to ask is, that you should place confidence in the Board of Admiralty, and in the present Government, for the future safety of the country. We welcome you, and we ask you to take some leading part in making more complete than it is at present the naval defence of the Empire. I wish to recognise all that our cousins over the sea have done in consequence of decisions of former Conferences. I know that you gave to the Government and to the Admiralty, with a free and unstinting hand, the help that you thought you could manage to give. Gentlemen, I have only one reservation to make, and in making it I ask that, as we have proved ourselves successful in the past, you should put your trust in us now. The only reservation that the Admiralty desire to make is, that they claim to have the charge of the strategical questions which are necessarily involved in naval defence, to hold the command of the naval forces of the country, and to arrange the distribution of ships in the best possible manner to resist attacks and to defend the Empire at large, whether it be our own islands or the dominions beyond the seas. We thoroughly recognise we are responsible for that defence. We want you to give us all the assistance you can, but we do not come to you as beggars; we gladly take all that you can give us, but at the same time, if you are not inclined to give us the help we hope to have from you, we acknowledge our absolute obligation to defend the King's dominions across the sea to the best of our ability.

Gentlemen, what I have to say is that the Admiralty and His Majesty's Government are perfectly ready to meet these contributors to Admiralty funds in a liberal and conciliatory manner. We do not wish to insist that the contributions from the Colonies should necessarily be in the form only of money. We are quite ready to enter into any arrangements with the Colonies that may seem most suitable to them, and which may seem to bring advantage to the Navy, and the advantage to the Colonies themselves. I have here drawn up a short statement of what may be called the general principle with which the Admiralty desire to meet the representatives of the self-governing Dominions of the King beyond the seas. His Majesty's Government recognise the natural desire of the self governing colonies to have a more particular share in providing the naval defence force of the Empire, and, so long as the condition of unity in command and direction of the fleet is maintained, they are ready to consider a modification of the existing arrangements to meet the views of the various colonies. In the opinion of the Government, while the distribution of the fleet must be determined by strategical requirements of which the Admiralty are the judge, it would be of great assistance if the Colonial Governments would undertake to provide for local service in the Imperial Squadron the smaller vessels that are useful for defence against possible raids or for co-operation with a squadron, and also to equip and maintain docks and fitting establishments which can be used by His Majesty's Ships. It will further be of much assistance if coaling facilities are provided, and arrangements can be made for a

supply of coal and naval stores which otherwise would have to be sent out specially or purchased locally.

I understand that, in Australia particularly, and in South Africa, it is desired to start some naval service of your own. Perhaps I might suggest that if the provision of the smaller craft which are necessary incident to the work of a great fleet of modern battleships could be made locally, it would be a very great help to the general work of the navy. You cannot take the small craft such as torpedo-boats and submarines across the ocean, and for warships to arrive in South Africa or in Australia or in New Zealand or in Canada, and find ready to their hand well-trained men in good vessels of this kind, would be an enormous advantage to them. It would be an enormous advantage to find ready to their hand men well trained, ready to take a part in the work of the fleet. *There is, I think, the further advantage in these small flotillas, that they will be an admirable means of coast defence: that you will be able by the use of them to avoid practically all danger from any sudden raid which might be made by a cruising squadron.* What I should like to point out is that, above all things in this work, the submarine is probably the most important and the most effective weapon. *It is the weapon with which you can meet the fleet attacking during the day, or individual ships attacking by day.* I am assured by my advisors at the Admiralty that it is a most important weapon; that it has already reached very considerable development; and it is one on which we may rely with some confidence. That is a view that is very strongly taken by some of the leading men in the French Navy, who *think that the submarine is really the weapon of the future.* I believe myself that the provision of submarines and all smaller torpedo destroyers and boats would be of the greatest help to the navy, supposing it were, as I hope it may not be, drawn into a war abroad.

We want to consult with you as to the details of this scheme. Of course if each separate Colony is to be treated on a different footing, we are quite ready to do that and to make separate arrangements with each separate Colony according to its own wishes. I thoroughly recognise the great difference that there is between the conditions of one county and another. The desire of the Admiralty is to meet those wishes so far as they possibly can be met. I think perhaps it is impossible suddenly to make a change. I would suggest that a beginning should be made, and that probably the best way to start would be to allocate to local purposes certain portions of the subsidies already given. The particular purpose to which that money should be devoted should be discussed in detail between the representatives of the various Colonies and the Admiralty, so that a thoroughly good scheme might be worked out in the end. At the same time we do not put aside the payment of subsidies at all. From those Colonies who are desirous of continuing altogether on the lines on which they have gone in the past, we shall be very glad to accept their contributions, and accept it gratefully, and do the best to apply the money in a useful manner.

(37)

Minute by Captain Ottley on docket, 'Mr. Deakin's new proposals for an abrogation of the present Australian Naval Agreement, and the Organisation of a naval force for local defence under the Commonwealth flag', 29 April 1907
- PRO: ADM 1/7949.

The enclosed documents (Papers A and B) relate to Mr. Deakin's proposals.

- A. is a summary of Mr. Deakin's suggestions (a draft of this memorandum was submitted to him for revision, so that it may be taken as correctly representing his views -)
- B. is a submission indicating some of the points which will need consideration if Their Lordships' decide to accept the proposals of Mr. Deakin in principle.

It now appears desirable to invite Mr. Deakin to meet the Board (or representatives of the Board), for an official discussion.

C.L. Ottley.

Paper A.

Memorandum of interview between Mr. Deakin (Premier of Australian Commonwealth) and the Naval Intelligence Department.

24th April 1907

Present: Mr. Deakin
Captain Ottley, Director of Naval intelligence.
Captain Tudor, assistant Director of Naval Ordnance.
Captain Jones, assistant Director of Naval Intelligence.
Mr. Graham Greene, assistant Secretary of the Admiralty.

Mr. Deakin explained that, for the following reasons (inter alia) the Commonwealth Government desired to modify the present Naval Agreement.

1. While fully recognising the paramount importance of "Unity of Control" for all the general Naval forces of the Empire, the people of Australia regarded the present contribution of £200,000 to the cost of the Imperial Navy as being somewhat in the nature of a tribute, and it is therefore desirable if possible to find some means by which Australia can co-operate with the Admiralty in the naval defence of the Empire without offence to the Constitutional doctrine that the Government which levies taxation should be responsible for the expenditure and management.
2. To meet this difficulty Mr. Deakin stated that a local defence force was proposed by Australia under the political control of the Commonwealth Government as to finance and allocation to different ports but under naval discipline and inviting inspection by the Naval Commander-in-Chief.
3. The personnel of this local force would be imperial in character and whether British or Australian in order to preserve its efficiency should only serve for limited periods in the local flotillas after previous training in the Navy to which they might return on the expiration of their term of local service.

4. The objections to a dual system of control were, he thought, not so great as was supposed. The control which Australians desired was constitutional. The Commonwealth Government should have control over the movements and stationing of the vessels but would preserve the character and discipline of the force. In war the functions of the flotillas being local could not be directly controlled by the Commander-in-Chief of the sea-going fleet, who might be thousands of miles away, but the sphere of their action and such matters as recognition signals &c., &c., would in time of war be arranged in association with that officer in order that harmonious co-operation of the sea-going and local forces might be assured.
5. [omitted]
6. Mr. Deakin thought that Colonial rates of pay should be given to all men whether British or Australian serving in the local forces. Australians serving in the Imperial ships whether for training or as part compliment to be paid British rates of pay only, their allowances being deferred while so serving.
7. The Commonwealth to pay for the entire upkeep of the local forces and the deferred pay for all Australians under training in the Navy for these forces.
8. All other Colonial payments to the Imperial exchequer to cease.

Paper B.

Mr. Deakin's proposal to terminate the Agreement raises many difficult questions in regard to finance, discipline, international status of the new forces &c. which can doubtless be settled by adequate discussion and mutual concessions. But there is one point about which no concession is possible and which as a matter of principle should be finally settled before we can proceed any further.

The point in question is that of the control of the new force. Mr. Deakin wishes for political control by the Commonwealth of a force which is Imperial in character, if not for all intents and purposes and integral part of the Royal Navy. It appears almost impossible to reconcile these two conditions in actual practice.

The Admiralty cannot consent to place any part of the Imperial Naval forces under control of authority other than their own and it seems necessary therefore to inform Mr. Deakin that, while the Admiralty is desirous of meeting his wishes in every way possible the Board could not consent to regard the new force as a part of the Navy except when it is placed under their direct orders.

If the Commonwealth still desires to establish a local force it should be clearly understood in the first place that it will be a purely Colonial force, which in peace time would only be employed on Imperial service if the Commonwealth specially placed it at the disposal of the Imperial Government for that purpose. In war the force should only be employed for the local protection of Australian ports unless specific arrangements were made to the contrary.

If Mr. Deakin would agree so far, it will become necessary to consult the New Zealand Government since the existing Agreement is tripartite.

Assuming that Australia's desire to terminate the Agreement wins the consent of the Imperial Government and is not objected to by New Zealand the next step will be for the Commonwealth to formulate definite proposals which would serve as a basis of discussion between the two Governments.

It is plain that any discussion of details is futile until it has been decided

(1) whether the force is to be Colonial or Imperial, and

(2) what classes of vessels and what approximate numbers of ships and personnel the Commonwealth Government intends should constitute the force they propose to establish.

The Admiralty would doubtless be willing to cordially meet the wishes of the Commonwealth Government in every possible way in the establishment of the new force, more particularly in regard to the reception of officers and men of the Commonwealth flotillas for training on board His Majesty's ships.

Ottley

Minute (29 April 1907) by Sir John Fisher:—

I agree with DNI in the absolute impossibility of agreeing to Mr. Deakin's proposals. The simple thing is to tell Mr. Deakin there is no objection to abrogate the present agreement and that Australia will have our best advice in arranging for any colonial naval force they like to adopt.

(38)

Letter from Alfred Deakin to Admiral Sir John Fisher, 12 August 1907, with
marginal comments by Fisher - PRO: ADM 1/7949.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PRIME MINISTER.
Melbourne, 12th August, 1907.

My dear Sir John Fisher,

The friendliness and frankness with which you were kind enough to personally explain to me the Admiralty¹ view of Naval Policy and its relation to the Squadron in Australian waters leads me to take advantage of your courtesy again in this informal fashion in order to assist towards a better mutual understanding. It is probable that I shall have to put some questions to Lord Tweedmouth officially at an early date but write to you now unofficially because owing to the pressure upon me while in London I had no opportunity of entering with him into the particulars involved in the proposal, as I was able to do with you. I shall write him too but more briefly and from another standpoint.

At present I am supposed to be resting for recuperative purposes and not to be concerned with business of any kind. This matter, however, will not wait.

The situation is this. According to your judgement the present subsidised Australian Squadron ought not to be continued. Its best ships should be removed and united with those of the Indian and China Squadrons in one joint Eastern Fleet of powerful vessels.² If war broke out this would be done at once now under the Agreement,³ so that the concentrated naval forces in these seas might be brought to bear upon our foe wherever he might be found; on our coasts; off Japan; or off Colombo. Consequently the sooner our present Squadron can be merged in this joint Eastern Squadron in time of peace, so as to be ready for war, the better. The £240,000 subsidy paid by Australia and New Zealand does not compensate you for its severance in time of peace from the other two Squadrons now existing. It would pay you to forego the subsidy and get your best ships into that Squadron free from the limitations imposed by your Agreement with us of 1903.⁴ While we hold you to that bargain we are impairing the striking force of the navy in the East, instead of increasing it, as was formerly supposed.⁵ In the interests of the Empire the Agreement ought to be cancelled as soon as possible. In the interests of Australia, if they can be considered alone, the same course is necessary. The best defence of this country can be secured by a joint Eastern Squadron of powerful ships operating wherever necessary.⁶ Both

¹ No. It was my personal views which he asked me for.

² Yes. This is my private opinion and always has been so.

³ Yes

⁴ No. Nothing like! Never was there such an extravagant waste of money, ships, men as this agreement entails on the Admiralty.

⁵ Yes

⁶ Yes

the Empire and Australia are therefore losing instead of gaining by the present Agreement.⁷

If the three existing Squadrons were consolidated so far as their best vessels were concerned the rest of the ships now on this station would be left as at present quite apart from any Agreement. They would patrol the Pacific, conduct surveys, and make their present rounds as they do now. Their base would be in Sydney, where they would use all the accommodation you now possess. They would be seen there and elsewhere on our coasts as occasion required. In addition the new concentrated Squadron would visit us say once a year in order that our capitals, which are all on the seaboard, might be kept in touch with the British Navy. This would be the new order of things after the Agreement was cancelled, and without any new Agreement being required.⁸

Under these circumstances the Commonwealth would devote itself to the defence of its harbours and coasts. It would spend the sums advised by the Committee of Imperial Defence Report in protecting our harbours by shore works. It will in addition add local floating defences. You strongly urge submarines at each principal port;⁹ two at least in Sydney and Melbourne and one at each of the other capitals, together with some swift ocean going destroyers capable of patrolling our coasts.¹⁰ Pending the building of the latter perhaps you could give us a couple of the best cruisers of the "P" class that you are laying aside in the course of your reorganisation. We could man these for the time being with Australians now engaged in the Squadron if you thought fit to spare them for a fixed period.¹¹ In any event whatever ships and men we have will be available in time of war in the event of an attack upon our coasts, in order to act with the concentrated Royal Navy Squadron, or any part of it, in our waters. I understand that these submersibles and destroyers would afford a very real help to your Squadron and be of great value from the point of view of Imperial Defence in these seas.¹² They and the harbour works, etc. would represent our naval contribution instead of the present subsidy.

These submersibles and destroyers, built, manned, and maintained at the sole expense of the Commonwealth, would remain under the control of its Government.¹³ Their distribution and movements would be entirely subject to that Government at all times. But its officers and men would either be engaged here under the same conditions as those of the Royal Navy or be obtained from the Royal Navy. They would serve on our local vessels for the usual term on this station, whatever it might be, and then pass into other vessels of yours to continue their training elsewhere so as to keep them, while here, up to at least an equal standard of efficiency to that required everywhere in the Royal Navy. They would remain members of that Navy in every sense, recruited and serving under its laws. Their service in our ships would count in the same fashion as upon similar vessels in the Navy. They would be regularly inspected here by the Admiral or his deputies and be subject to Naval discipline with all the penalties and

⁷ Yes. This was my opinion expressed to Mr. Deakin.

⁸ He grabs a lot in this paragraph! But on the whole it is what would be done.

⁹ Yes

¹⁰ Yes

¹¹ No

¹² Yes

¹³ Yes - only in peace.

privileges associated with it.¹⁴ Australia would pay them while they were on this Station at Australian rates of pay, though of course they would accept the usual deductions necessary to continue their title to share in the Royal Navy Pension Fund. *Preference would be given wherever possible in our vessels to Australian officers and seamen as opportunity occurred.* Our ships would fly the white ensign with the Southern Cross and be altogether Australian in cost and in political control as to their movements and stations. In everything else they would be part of the British Navy, the officers and men being simply seconded for fixed terms for service under our general control, but in every other respect indistinguishable from the men in the Imperial Squadrons here or elsewhere. In time of war, in my opinion, they would be placed by the Commonwealth Government of the day directly under the Admiral commanding the Eastern Squadron, since he would be the highest naval authority in this part of the world. I doubt if any conditions would be imposed upon this transfer at such a time, but it must be clearly understood that any decision on these points must rest absolutely in the hands of the responsible Government of Australia when such an emergency arises.¹⁵

I should like to have the benefit of your closest criticism of my statement, of your own position, and upon this outline as a whole, which, but for the breakdown of my health, would have been submitted to you some weeks sooner.¹⁶ If pressed for time I may have to cable some questions to the Admiralty before long which this exposition of my views may help to make intelligible to you. Of course any suggestions or comments of yours will be very welcome. Although our intercourse in London was unfortunately brief your grasp of the whole position was so firm and comprehensive that I feel we cannot do better than help you to combine Australian and Imperial Defence in one.¹⁷

They always must be one. We want the most effective ships and efficient men here with ample prospects of advancement to the latter when they merit it. We also want a flexible relation as intimate as possible between our Government and the Admiralty which shall encourage the development of our local defence to the fullest extent and in such a form as to supplement to the best advantage the Imperial Navy in our hemisphere.

I am,
My dear Sir John Fisher,
Yours very truly,
(Sd.) Alfred Deakin.

Admiral

Sir John A. Fisher, GCB, OM, etc.,
First Sea Lord of the Admiralty,
Admiralty Office,
WHITEHALL.

¹⁴ These details I told him would have to be completely thought out but on the whole I concur in all this

¹⁵ Yes

¹⁶ This is practically the statement left at the Admiralty and printed by the Colonial Office – except as regards cruisers.

¹⁷ I simply made no secret of my detestation of the agreement.

Memorandum by Captain Edmond Slade, Director of Naval Intelligence,
22 (October 1907 - PRO): ADM 1/7949.

REPORT OF CONFERENCE

22nd October 1907

As a result of discussion between Military and Naval Branches, DNI, and Captain Tudor, the following conclusions were arrived at, with regard to the offer of the Commonwealth Government as stated in the Commander-in-Chief's telegrams 85 [21 September] and 86.[22 September]:—

1. Offer of 1,000 men, Australians if possible, to be paid by Commonwealth for service on Australian Station. If this means the 1,000 men should be retained on the Australia Station it would place a restriction on Imperial vessels and would be contrary to the line taken by the Admiralty at the Colonial Conference.
2. Offer of 2 Cruisers P class or superior carrying 400 of these 1,000 Australians, to be retained Australian Coast peace or War. This is open to the same objection.
3. Loan of 2 P class Cruisers to be maintained by Commonwealth for training local naval militia (including Reserve). This might be considered.

The following proposals are suggested as an alternative:—

- (1) If the agreement is cancelled Admiralty will be prepared to train officers and men for Australian Navy on board HM ships of Eastern Fleet, or elsewhere.
- (2) Cost of such training to be borne entirely by Commonwealth Government, and men while embarked to be paid at Naval rates only and to be subject to naval discipline.
- (3) Admiralty to loan 2 P class Cruisers as Training Ships for any Australian forces. These cruisers to be manned by Australian Officers and crews but Imperial officers and rating to be lent until Australians are available.
- (4) Commonwealth Government to pay entire cost of maintenance of these cruisers and to have entire control of them.
- (5) Sydney to be retained as head quarters of any Imperial Ships which Admiralty may keep on Station for island work or may send from time to time to visit the station. All such ships to be disposed as Admiralty may think fit.

DNI'S REMARKS

It seems as if Mr. Deakin wants to get all that he now has without paying the Imperial Government any thing for it, and with the right of control thrown in. At the same time we cannot afford to throw cold water on the scheme and we must keep alive the feeling of national interest in the Navy if we can. If we give them the P class cruisers instead of the present obsolete vessels that they have got we shall not do ourselves any harm and it might simplify future negotiations.

We must stick out at all cost for:—

1. Absolute control of all war like operations in war. This means that the Admiral shall have absolute command of all the Commonwealth ships and torpedo craft from the moment hostilities commence. It will not necessarily mean that they will be withdrawn from the Australian waters, that is a matter for the orders given to the Admiral by the Admiralty, and might very well be arranged.
2. No flag to be flown but the White Ensign, or the Blue Ensign with the Commonwealth device. The White Ensign should not under any circumstances be charged with any device but should stand for Imperial Service only. In war, after the vessels come under the Admiral, they should fly the White Ensign.
3. The Colonial Cruisers and Torpedo boats should have no right of cruising outside Australian waters, unless they come under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief. If they wish to send them to the Pacific Islands then the Colonial Government must hand them over to the Admiral for the time they are away from Colonial waters, and they must take their orders from, and be responsible for their actions to him.

(initialled) EJWS.

Speech by Alfred Deakin to House of Representatives, Parliament of
Commonwealth of Australia, 13 December 1907, printed correspondence
No.11, p. 16 - PRO: ADM 1/7949

While feeling that for every constitutional reason, any flotilla created and maintained by the Commonwealth must be under Commonwealth control, I have grown more and more deeply to realise the risks of attempting to create a small force solely of our own, in which the men and officers would have no hope of experience or advancement except within its bounds. A small flotilla of that description would remain a thing apart, not directly committed to the high standards of the Imperial Navy. In the Imperial Navy, as honourable members are aware, the men and officers on every station are changed at short periods. Elaborate provisions are made to prevent them becoming hide-bound, sit-at-ease, indifferent, or mechanical. They are transferred from ship to ship. They are put regularly through fresh courses of training. They have to return periodically to learn the latest methods in their particular departments. The consequence is that the Royal Navy is the most progressive weapon, always kept up-to-date, its men constantly in practical training, and always stimulated by competition, by examination, and by every other means which can be applied, in addition to the always powerful incitements offered by frequent prospects of promotion to vacancies in the many fleets of the empire. I think that the more honourable members reflect upon it, the more they will see how difference must be the condition of a little land-locked navy—if one may so call it—of a small flotilla cut off by itself, its officers and men removed from the possibility of promotion or advancement, except by the slow and often unsatisfactory process of seniority, and with few opportunities for them to keep themselves abreast of the rapid advances made in their branches of the service. I contend, with the diffidence which must attach to a layman, though with some confidence, that the force of these criticisms will be made apparent if you take any country with a small flotilla or a few small ships, and compare these with the same class of ships and the same class of men engaged in larger fleets with larger opportunities, and above all with those of the greatest of maritime powers, the British Navy. I ventured, therefore, to attempt to find a means by which we could get the whole benefit of connexion [sic] with the Admiralty and the Imperial Fleet, sharing its standards, its training, and its prizes, and yet maintain the Australian character of our flotilla, and so made the suggestion which I now summarise. Let our officers and men be engaged here, under the same conditions as those of the Royal Navy, or be obtained after they have served in the Royal Navy. Let them serve on our local vessels for the usual term on this station, whatever it may be, and then pass into other ships of the Royal Navy, to continue their training elsewhere. This would keep them, while here, up to the standard of efficiency at least equal to that required everywhere in the Royal Navy. They would remain members of that Navy in every sense, recruited and serving under its laws. Their services in our ships would count in the same fashion as upon similar vessels in the Navy. They would be regularly inspected here by the Admiral or his deputies, and be subject to naval discipline. Australia would pay them, while they were on this station, at Australian rates of pay, though of course they would accept the usual deductions necessary to continue their title to share in the Royal Navy pensions fund. Preference would be

given wherever possible in our vessels to Australian officers and seamen at every opportunity that occurred. ... Under this plan we should procure, by the expenditure of the same amount of money, a far more efficient, active, and progressive service than we could hope to do with a navy in a back-water—a service solely our own, and limited by our exchequer. It would then be practically a branch of the British fleet, though under the Commonwealth so far as political control was concerned.

(42)

Extract from minute, by W. Graham Greene, Assistant-Secretary to the Admiralty, 15 April 1908, on letter received from Colonial Office 3 April 1908
- PRO: ADM 1/7949.

[Admiral Fawkes] is of the opinion that neither Mr. Deakin nor the Minister of Defence have the necessary knowledge themselves for working out a scheme of naval organisation in detail, nor have they a staff of skilled officers on whom they could rely for the purpose. It will therefore, be of little use to press the Commonwealth Government to state their policy in more complete detail.

Memorandum by Captain Slade, A5, 15 June 1908 - Queen's University,
Kingston, Ontario: Slade Papers. (draft copy in PRO: ADM 1/7949)

AUSTRALIAN NAVAL DEFENCE FORCE
MEMORANDUM BY THE DNI

From a purely strategical point of view the provision of naval defence for the Commonwealth of Australia should remain in the hands of the Imperial Authorities, and the Commonwealth should assist in doing so by furnishing a yearly subsidy. This subsidy should, strictly speaking, be paid over without conditions, as is now proposed to be done by New Zealand, and the Imperial Government should use it to make such provision as it thinks fit for the defence of these territories. Theoretically this is what ought to be done, practically it is impossible after a time in a country with democratic parliamentary institutions. Money is voted year by year in the expenditure of which the Commonwealth Parliament has no voice, and sooner or later a point must be reached when objections will be raised. It is the teaching of the history of all democratic institutions. It is very strongly developed in our own Parliament where the cry of taxation without representation and control immediately raises a storm.

It was therefore inevitable that a proposal of some such nature as that put forward by Mr. Deakin should be made. The question now to be decided by the Board is not whether this proposal shall be acceded to or not, this has already been done in principle at the Colonial Conference, but how the scheme can be worked out so as to be as little harmful as possible.

The proposal put forward by Mr. Deakin in broad lines is:-

1. The abrogation of the present agreement.
2. The Commonwealth to take over local naval defence - i.e. to provide the flotillas of destroyers and submarines that will be necessary for the defence of her coasts.
3. The Commonwealth to raise 1,000 men - a proportion of whom would go to man the flotillas provided, the remainder he thought would serve in the Imperial Forces as representing the Commonwealth contribution.
4. The control of the Commonwealth Naval Forces to rest with the Commonwealth Government in peace and war - but if their Government considered it advisable to hand over control to the Imperial Naval Officer in command of the station in time of war, they could do so.
5. Besides these proposals he suggested that the Admiralty should lend the Commonwealth some of the P class cruisers now on the station for the purpose of training the officers and men.

Taking these proposals seriatim, I would submit the following observations.

1. The Admiralty would be in a far easier position with regard to Colonial Defence if the agreement is abrogated. We should be very glad to accept the subsidy provided it is not accompanied with any conditions as to the maintenance of specified ships on the coasts of Australia, but if the acceptance of the money entails a corresponding curtailment of freedom of action on the part of the Admiralty then we are better without it.

2. If the Commonwealth is to raise and equip any part of the naval forces of the Empire, then the part she should undertake is the flotilla that may be required for her local defences. As long as Japan was a negligible quantity in naval affairs, there was no necessity for a flotilla for Australia, but the strategic situation in the Far East has greatly changed, and is still changing, so that we cannot say now that there is no use for such a form of defence at all. China is shewing signs of re-awakening and if she follows in the footsteps of Japan, there will be all the more reason in the future for the existence of a local flotilla. A flotilla has necessarily more or less the character of a localised force. It cannot be readily moved about the world at short notice, and its function in the role of coastal defence is that of a very highly mobile local force. If the Commonwealth is to have naval forces of its own, it is therefore desirable that she should be limited to the provision of vessels whose function is purely local.

3. The number of men suggested by Mr. Deakin is far too few to provide for all he wants.

4. The Control of the Commonwealth Naval Forces in peace would naturally rest with the Commonwealth Government but whether this would be so in war is a question which has yet to be decided. The legal aspect of it has been referred to the Law Officers of the Crown, but their opinion has not yet been received. Politically, I think it would be disastrous, particularly as the idea is that the vessels in question shall fly a distinctive ensign. If we are engaged in war, I think that the control of the active forces of the Crown must rest with the Imperial Government as represented by the Senior Imperial Officer on the spot, and above all things, that there should be only one ensign under which operations can be carried out and that one the white ensign. To allow another would at once bring in a feeling of difference between two parts of the same force, and would not tend to promote unity of action.

5. Since the 1,000 men proposed are not enough for the flotilla, it is difficult to see how they can be used for manning the P class cruisers. If they could, the training they would receive in this class of vessel would not be of much service to them in the flotillas of submarines and destroyers.

Since Mr. Deakin had evidently not grasped the difficulties in working out the details of his proposals, the Admiralty have told him that they would do so in the way they think would be in accordance with his wishes. In sending the details out for his information and criticism, it should be clearly stated that the scheme has been produced on his initiative, and that it is only put forward as a possible way of working out his ideas. The Admiralty do not themselves wish to propose any alteration in existing arrangements, but they will assist him in elaborating any scheme he likes to suggest, and then it is for him to decide whether to put the proposition forward for the sanction of the Government or not. The Admiralty cannot accept any responsibility for the main outlines of the scheme, all they can do is to point out to Mr. Deakin how it is possible to make it work.

The scheme as far as it is understood is to provide 9 submarines (C Class) and 6 destroyers (River Class) and to officer and man them entirely from the Commonwealth.

The provision of the vessels themselves is an easy matter and is merely a question of money.

The attached tables give an estimate of the cost of building and upkeep (exclusive of wages) of the proposed flotilla. The cost of building the submarines will be greater than that shewn as they probably will have to be sent out to the

Commonwealth in parts and put together there. This will also necessitate taking out skilled workmen to rebuild the first two at least. After this the Commonwealth workmen will be able to do it themselves.

The cost of coal is obtained from the average expenditure of similar boats in Home waters over a series of years. The prices are at the average price of Welsh coal in England. In order to arrive at the cost in Australia, the additional cost of similar coal out there must be added. The estimate must be taken as the lowest figure at which such a flotilla as is asked for can be maintained.

When we come to consider how to provide the officers and men, the question is not nearly so simple, particularly in the case of the former. The conditions of service of the officers and men are so distinct that it is better to deal with each separately.

Taking the officers first. The numbers required for actually manning the flotilla and for subsidiary services are:—

Captain	1
Commanders	2
Lieutenants	26
Sub-Lieutenants	18
Engineer-Commanders	2
Engineer-Lieutenants	8
Warrant Officers	8
Doctors	2
Paymasters	2

In order to provide for sick, leave, instruction and contingencies the numbers should be:—

Captain	1
Commanders	3
Lieutenants	32
Sub-Lieutenants	24
Engineer-Commanders	2
Engineer-Lieutenants	10
Warrant Officers	9
Doctors	2
Paymasters	2

It is evident that on these figures it will be very difficult to arrange for a proper flow of promotion. The service for which they are to be engaged is one necessitating young men. It is our experience that no man after 40 years of age is fit for either destroyer or submarine work. It will therefore be necessary, if the service is to be kept as a purely Australian concern, to make a rule that all Lieutenants who are not promoted to Commander before the age of 40 must be retired. If the service is officered from the Imperial Service this rule will not be necessary, as officers of suitable age will be supplied. A similar rule should be made with regard to Sub-Lieutenants, fixing the age limit at 28. The Engineer-Lieutenants should come under the same rule as the other Lieutenants. If the system of common training is adopted as in the Imperial service, then the numbers will be:—

Commanders	5
Lieutenants	40
Sub-Lieutenants	26

This will allow for 2 Commanders, 8 Lieutenants and 2 Sub-Lieutenants being detailed for engineering duties. The age limit for Commanders should be 50 and that for Captain 55, as in the Imperial service. As regards the latter the rule may appear to be hard, as a man is fit for a great deal of administrative work after he is 55, but if the service is to be kept efficient, unless a certain proportion of the younger men at least see a prospect of rising to the head of their profession, there will be little or no incentive to them to put their best efforts into the work.

Having now dealt very generally with the conditions of service, it is necessary to see how the requisite numbers can be obtained.

There are three ways in which this can be done.

(A). To increase the numbers of the Imperial Establishment by the numbers required for the Commonwealth Forces and to permit free interchange between the two Services. The Commonwealth to pay its proportion of the salaries and pensions that is to say they will pay to the Imperial Government a sum equivalent to the full pay of the officers employed by them, together with a sum to be assessed by the Accountant-general's Department which will represent their share of the extra liability incurred by the Admiralty for pensions owing to the increase in the numbers of the active service. I have not suggested that they should pay anything for the increased cost of training, as the Imperial Service will benefit to a certain extent by the larger number of officers to select from.

(B). To increase the number of entries into the RN College at Osborne by the number required to provide for the Commonwealth Forces. On reaching the rank of Sub-Lieutenant a sufficient number to be taken to provide for the Commonwealth necessities: preference being given to boys whose homes are in Australia. The Commonwealth to pay the increase in the expenses of the training establishments and the salaries up to the time that the officers leave the Imperial Service.

(C). To enter young men with Mate's and Engineer's certificates of between the ages of 18-25 direct into the Commonwealth Service. These officers would have to be sent to England to undergo 12 months' training and after that they would spend another 12 months, as their services can be spared, in one of the sea-going flotillas. In this case the Commonwealth would pay their officers themselves, the whole responsibility for the management of the service would lie with them. The Imperial Service would only agree to accept a certain number of officers each year for training in the Gunnery and other School Ships, afterwards giving them a certain amount of practical training afloat.

SCHEME A

To increase the numbers of the Imperial Establishment to provide for the Commonwealth Force, which is to be interchangeable.

1.- Numbers of Officers and Men required.

The materiel in each case is taken as –

1 Depot Ship for Submarines (“Bonaventure”)

9 Submarines (C Class)

1 Depot Ship for Destroyers (“Pelorus”)

6 Destroyers.

(a) Officers.

The actual number of officers allowed by complement is shown in Column I of Table below. Looking at the short time that Sub-Lieutenants spend in rank and the general experience which they should then be acquiring to fit them for the rank of Lieutenant it would not be in the interests of these young officers to second them for Australian Service. It is proposed therefore to substitute for them Lieutenants in the Submarines and Warrant Officers in the Destroyers. This is not an ideal arrangement but it is preferable to the alternative of appointing Sub-Lieutenants to the Australian service for one year only. If this arrangement is approved the figures will be as shown in Column II. It will be necessary to allow the usual sea percentage for leave, sickness and crossing reliefs, viz. 15% owing to the time which will be taken by the crossing reliefs, and the numbers then become as in Column III. But so large an addition to the numbers of Lieutenants without corresponding increases in the higher ranks will accentuate the difficulty of keeping up the proper flow of promotion. The relative proportion of the ranks of Captain, Commander and Lieutenant as laid down for the Royal Navy is –

<u>Captain</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Lieutenant.</u>
1	1½	6

Working on this basis the numbers will be as shown in Column IV. The Commonwealth Government can hardly be expected, however, to bear the cost of such ineffective numbers as 7 Captains for a requirement of 1, and 10 Commanders for a requirement of 2. The figures have therefore been readjusted on the lines that Junior Captains can be employed in lieu of Commanders in command of the two Depot Ships and Junior Commanders in command of the six Destroyers in lieu of Lieutenants and also as Executive Officer in each of the Depot ships. This would give a requirement of 3 Captains, 8 Commanders and 32 Lieutenants, adding 15% for sick and reliefs 3 Captains, 9 Commanders and 38 Lieutenants, and the total numbers on this basis to afford a fair ratio of promotion would work out to 6, 9 and 38 respectively. It is considered therefore that the numbers should be as shown in Column V.

I.	II. (Sub- Lieutenants taken out)	III. (15% added)	IV. (to allow ratio of promotion)	V. (adjusted)
1 Captain (in charge)	1	1	8	6
2 Commanders	2	2	12	9
28 Lieutenants	40	47	47	38
18 Sub-Lieutenants	-	-	-	-
2 Engineer Commanders or Engineer Lieutenants (Senr.)	2	2	2	2
8 Engineer Lieutenants (Junnr.) (8 Gunners	8 (14	9 17)	9	9
13 Warrant (1 Boatswain Officers (2 Carpenters (2 Artificer Engineers.	19 (1 (2 (2	1) 22 (2) (2)	22	22
2 Surgeons	2	2	2	2
2 Paymasters	2	2	2	2
1 Assistant Paymaster or Clerk.	1	1	1	1
	77	88	105	91

(b) Men.

The total number of men allowed by complement is 975 composed as shown below:-

	<u>Substantive Rating.</u>		<u>Non Substantive rates included in Substantive numbers.</u>	
Seamen	(C.P.O. & P.O.	44	G.M.	3
	(L.S.	53	G.L. 2nd Class	15
	(A.B. & Ord.	261	G.L. 3rd Class	36
	(P.O. & other Telegraphists	14	S.G.	41
	(Signal Branch	23	T.G.M.	9
	(Sailmakers	1	T.C.	6
			L.T.O	22
Engine Room	(C. & E.R.A.s	53	S.T.	28
	(Mechanicians	12	P./T.I. 2 Cl	2
	(Chief Stokers. & S.P.Os	70	Bugler	2
	(L.Sto.	57	Yeoman of Stores	2
	(Stokers	300	Engineer Writer	1
			Artificer Diver	1
			Diver	6
		Tailor	2	
		<u>Artisan.</u>		
		28		
		<u>Accountant Branch.</u>		
		23		
		<u>Medical.</u>		
		5		
		<u>Miscellaneous.</u>		
		31		

Allowing 15% in addition for sick and crossing reliefs the total numbers required will be 1125.

II.- Establishments necessary in Australia.

It is assumed that all repairs will be carried out by contract as under Scheme C. but that as the Naval Establishment at Sydney will still be required for Imperial purposes facilities will be carried out by contract as under Scheme C. but that as the Naval Establishment at Sydney will still be required for Imperial purposes facilities will as far as possible be afforded to the Commonwealth Flotilla in the matter of Boat slips, storage of stores &c. If however Government Docks are started for the Depot Ships, Destroyers and Submarines, the Establishment will be worked by Commonwealth employees and not by Naval Ranks and Ratings and Civilian Staff of the Imperial Dockyards.

As the Active Service Officers and men will be seconded from the Imperial Navy temporarily no Training Establishment will be necessary at Sydney. They will be trained at home except in such matters as are learnt on board ship.

III.- Training Establishments at home.

Officers.

The Officers appointed to the Australian Submarines must be included with the "Submarine" Service as a whole, otherwise their time in and training for these billets will be wasted in the future. If so the Submarine Service Establishment of Officers must be increased by say 25 (24 actual requirements and 1 spare). The additional numbers to be trained annually on this account apart from the provision of the initial numbers required, will not be sufficiently large to be taken into consideration in estimating the expense, and this applies also to the Gunnery, Torpedo and Navigating Lieutenants.

Training Colleges.

Leaving the higher ranks out of account the number of extra Lieutenants and Engineer Officers to be provided to cover the Australian Service is 47, taking the waste as Cadet and Midshipman as roughly 25% and as Sub-Lieutenant 2% about 60 cadets should in the ordinary course be entered to provide this addition to the general list and 5 annually to keep the number up.

As far as the Lieutenants go, with the prospective state of that list there should be plenty available by the time the Australian Service is started, and in these circumstances no entries are necessary to supply the initial numbers leaving out of the question that if entered now it would be ten years before they would be available. The Junior Engineer Lieutenants can be obtained now by giving commissions to the Probationary Engineer Cadets and Private Students at Keyham. The Engineer Commanders need not be legislated for as there will be enough and to spare for many years to come.

The numbers of medical and Accountant Officers are so small that they need not be taken into account in the matter of Training.

The Warrant Officers can also be provided by promotion from the lists of qualified candidates: the Establishment may or may not have to be slightly increased.

Men.

The Australian entries must be for continuous service. As it is evidently the wish of the Commonwealth Government that they should furnish the Imperial navy with Australian Seamen &c. to an extent at least equivalent to the additional numbers required on account of this Service it seems necessary to start a Recruiting Office in

the Colony. The men and boys would be entered in the usual way out there and sent to England for training &c. presumably at expense of Commonwealth until arrival in England—to be drafted to the Australian ships as opportunities offer and as frequently in the course of their career as can be arranged with due regard to the requirements of those ships and the maintenance of an alternation of service between the Imperial and Australian Navies.

As the numbers of all classes to be entered annually will be 70 to 80 the cost of their training will be no inconsiderable item, and it is presumed that a subsidy will be paid by the Commonwealth Government on this account but, as the men who man the Australians will be part of the Imperial Forces and will be entered and trained in the usual course of the Service, it will be difficult to apportion between the Home and Commonwealth Governments. An estimate might however be based on:—

Seamen class	the cost of training a boy up to the time he goes to sea.
Stokers	the cost of a man's course of instruction in the Stoker Training Ships.
Mechanician	the cost of the 2 years course in the Mechanical Training Establishments

There must not be any appreciable increase in the Training Establishments at home either for their men's early instruction or for their training for non-substantive and higher substantive rates.

As regards the establishment of a Recruiting Office at Sydney the annual requirements to make good wastage on a total force of 1125 would only be from 70 to 80 and a very small recruiting staff would be necessary.

- 1 Warrant Officer (Pensioned).
- 1 Pensioner Petty Officer Recruiter

A room to be hired at Sydney as Headquarters and the Warrant Officer to travel as required. Pay and allowances to be granted as for Recruiters at home.

IV.- System of Reliefs.

Retention for a continuous period of 5 years in special work of this kind distinct from the general service would be prejudicial to the prospects of Officers and men. Except in the case of the Officer in charge who would be a Senior Captain and whose term of appointment might be for 3 years it is considered that the only efficient system will be to limit the period of service of Officers and men to the duration of a Ship's Commission, i.e. 2 years, and with the object of maintaining continuity in the work of the Flotilla to effect the relief of half the Officers and men each year. This could be done by a large cruiser (if one could be spared otherwise by freight), the cost of her maintenance during the trooping trip to be borne by the Commonwealth Government.

In this connection it may be pointed out that a difficulty is sure to arise if many Australians enter, on the question of the men's homes and where they will spend their leave. It is not seem [sic] how under this scheme their homes could be elsewhere than in England which would not be popular.

In the matter of advancement of Ratings the Australian Service would be on the same footing as a Foreign Station and the advancement of the various ratings serving in the Australian vessels would follow the general rules of the service.

Remarks,

It is not to be anticipated that with a scheme of interchangeability such as this it can be arranged that the Officers and men seconded from the Commonwealth Fleet shall be mainly of Australian birth. At present there are very few Australians in the Royal Navy and although the number of Colonial entries of cadets can be increased say by the additional 4 or 5 a year it is questionable whether it would be a good thing to go beyond this. Again as regards the men although Recruiting might now be started in the Commonwealth as suggested under III, it is doubtful whether the Imperial rates of pay and conditions of service will induce Australians to enter for Continuous Service, whilst if privileges are to be granted to Australians in the way of constant service out there, much discontent might be engendered amongst the Home recruited men.

In the inception of the scheme at any rate the Officers and men will not be Australians unless indeed the men of the present Australian Naval Force of which there are some 600 odd would transfer to the Imperial Navy. This is highly improbable looking at the terms on which they were entered, high rates of pay &c. In the inception of the scheme it would be as well to utilise their services for the Flotilla for the remainder of their terms of engagement but under their present rules and not as interchangeable.

The scheme of pension seems quite workable as the Commonwealth Government would pay a proportionate part in each case according to the number of years served in the Commonwealth Fleet. It will add however to the labour of calculating out pensions.

(signed) Slade

Minute by Graham Greene on 'Australian Naval Scheme – Draft letter to the Colonial Office', 14 August 1908 - PRO: ADM 1/7949.

In accordance with their Lordships' directions the scheme proposed by Mr. Deakin has now been analysed and put into a form as definite as circumstances permit, and it remains to be forwarded to the Colonial Office with a distinct indication of whether, if the scheme so elaborated is found to correspond to Mr. Deakin's ideas, the Admiralty are prepared to co-operate in order to give effect to it in lieu of the present Agreement.

Things have progressed too far since the Colonial Conference of 1907 for the Admiralty now to draw back if the scheme can be made to comply with any reasonable conditions.

Briefly the position is this—The Admiralty will be released from the Agreement and will be free to distribute the Ships of the Australian Squadron in such manner as strategic and Imperial necessities may require. The Australian Government will provide and maintain at their own cost a local flotilla of destroyers and submarines, and will also pay for the officers and men to man the same.

The advantages of the scheme are that the hands of the Admiralty will be free as regards the Australian squadron; a local defence flotilla will be maintained free of cost in Australian waters; a certain increase will be made in the numbers available for service in the Fleet without expense to Navy Funds; while the Australian Government will have the use of a personnel possessing the qualities which service in the Royal Navy will convey.

The disadvantages are that the Admiralty will have the obligation of arranging for the manning of the flotilla which will in time of peace be under the control of the Australian Government; and will only come under the Naval Commander-in-Chief in time of war; while the Australian Government would not be free to regard the local force as entirely their own, and difficulties of administration will occur.

From a wider point of view the scheme favours the idea of the naval defence of the Empire being in the hands of one Imperial force, and this may be put against the loss of direct monetary contribution by Australia to the expense of maintenance of the Royal Navy. . . .

Greene

Minute (17 August 1907) by Edmond Slade:—

I think that the sphere of employment of the local flotilla ought to be very distinctly defined . . .

Minute (18 August 1907) by Sir John Fisher:—

If the agreement is cancelled which I understand this arrangement supposes then the Admiralty recover their freedom of action and so I concur.

(initialled) JF

Draft letter to Australian Prime Minister, 20 August 1908 - PRO: ADM 1/7949

DRAFT LETTER TO PREMIER OF AUSTRALIA VIA COLONIAL OFFICE.

M-9102.

Admiralty,
20th August, 1908.

Sir,

With reference to Admiralty letters of 10th February, 1908, and 29th May, 1908, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to, acquaint you that they have made a careful enquiry into the scheme proposed by the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth for the establishment of a local naval force in substitution for the existing Naval Agreement.

As stated earlier in the course of the correspondence, their Lordships have had a difficulty in fully comprehending the extent of the scheme as sketched by Mr. Deakin, but they believe that they may take it to have the following salient features.

The Commonwealth Government, undertaking the responsibility of local naval defence, will provide the destroyers, submarines, and depôt ships constituting the flotilla, and maintain them fully equipped and efficient, and will also meet the expense of the pay, wages, provisions, and maintenance of the officers and men, who are to be provided by the Imperial Government, as many as possible of such officers and men being Australian citizens. The administrative control of the flotilla will rest with the Commonwealth Government, but the officers and men will form part of the Imperial Navy, and be subject to the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions in all particulars. The force will be under naval discipline, administered in the same way as the Imperial Navy, the proper sequence of command being insured by every officer from the Senior Officer downwards holding an Admiralty Commission. It is assumed that the Officer in chief command of the flotilla will take his orders from the Minister of Marine direct.

My Lords understand that the local flotilla will be employed in the territorial waters of the continent of Australia and of the dependencies that are under the administration of the Commonwealth Government. While in these waters, or while on the high seas passing from point to point in these territories, the ships and vessels forming the flotilla will be under the undivided control of the Commonwealth Government, but if they go to other places, they will then become subject to the directions of the Senior Naval Officer as representing the Imperial Government. This will not preclude the despatch of the ships on training cruises, arrangements being first made with the Naval Commander-in-Chief as to the programme the Government wish carried out.

In time of peace the vessels will be controlled and distributed in the waters of the Commonwealth without any interference from the Imperial Government, the only limitation being the necessity for the periodical transfer of officers and men from the flotilla to the fleet for training and other purposes, the arrangement of which will be determined by the Admiralty.

Mr. Deakin considered that in time of war or emergency the Commonwealth Government would place the flotilla under the orders of the Naval Commander-in-

Chief, but he expressed the opinion that the decision must rest with the responsible Government at the time, it being understood that the vessels should not be moved out of Australian waters without the approval of the Commonwealth Government.

Such is the scheme in broad outline as my Lords have understood it, and they have made their enquiries on that understanding, and I am to state that if this is approximately correct, while their Lordships do not wish it to be inferred that they desire to modify their attitude on the subject of the Naval Agreement as previously explained, they do not anticipate any insuperable difficulty in carrying it out.

A general exposition of the requirements of the scheme in regard to personnel and training is given in Appendix I, attached to this letter.

It is estimated that the total cost of building and equipping 6 destroyers, 9 submarines, and 2 depot or parent ships will amount to £1,277,500, as shown in Appendix II made up as follows:—

6 Destroyers	£473,500	
9 Submarines	£496,000	} £1,277,500
2 Depot ships	£308,000	

The manner and conditions under which these vessels will be constructed are left for future consideration, but their Lordships will give all the advice and assistance that the Commonwealth Government may desire, it being considered an advantage that the details of construction and armament should correspond with the general requirements of the Admiralty.

The annual maintenance of these vessels, including repairs, stores, and depreciation will amount to £186,000. It has been assumed that the repairs will be carried out at local shipbuilding yards, and will not involve any charges upon Sydney Dockyard, which will be reserved for Imperial purposes, as hitherto.

As regards personnel, the numbers required are estimated at 79 officers and 1,125 men, and the total annual cost, including pay and allowances, victualling, &c., will amount to £160,000 per annum as shown in Appendix III. It must be noted that the cost includes half pay and retiring allowances of officers, and pensions and gratuities of men, calculated on the assumption that the pay will be precisely the same as in the Imperial Navy, and particularly that gratuities on leaving and service pensions are treated as an equivalent for the higher salaries and wages prevailing in Australia. The experience of the present Agreement has convinced their Lordships that any attempt to combine a higher rate of pay in Australia with the ordinary conditions of pay and service prevailing in the Imperial Navy must be abandoned.

It is suggested that pensions to men for long service should be awarded after 22 years, and disability pensions after less service, under the conditions laid down in the King's Regulations, and that gratuities after short periods of service in the fleet should be payable on rules similar to those obtaining in the Royal Fleet Reserve. Under these rules a man can obtain a gratuity of £50 at the age of 40 after having served for five years (or more) in the Fleet, followed by service in the Reserve consisting of 5 year periods up to a total of 20 years. The former condition should be generally applicable to the skilled ratings, and the latter to the general service men, the time taken in training the skilled men required for destroyers and submarines precluding the adoption of an engagement terminable after 5 years only.

It will be noticed that the scheme as here developed will involve a larger charge upon the Commonwealth funds than that hitherto payable, but my Lords have reason to believe from the statements made by Mr. Deakin that it will not be in excess

of the amount he was prepared to pay to give effect to the scheme. The total *annual* charge as set forth is estimated at £346,000, and even if this should be somewhat under the mark, it is not considered that a flotilla constituted on the lines desired by the Commonwealth Government could be provided at less cost, possessing, as it will, all the advantages of close connection with the Imperial Navy.

As previously stated, my Lords consider that the security from overseas attack of the Empire generally of which the Australian Continent forms an important part, is best secured by the operation of the Imperial Navy, distributed as the strategic necessities of the moment dictate. At the same time they recognise that under certain contingencies, the establishment of a local flotilla acting in conjunction with the Imperial force would greatly assist in the operations of the latter. My Lords also recognise the importance, politically, of fostering a feeling of security among the inhabitants of the coast towns of the Commonwealth by the provision of a local force which will always be at hand. In the absence, therefore, of any direct contribution to the expenses of the Imperial Navy, my Lords will be ready to co-operate in the formation of such a flotilla, subject to a satisfactory understanding being arrived at in regard to the general administration of the force.

At the same time their Lordships cannot disguise from themselves the fact that the carrying out of the scheme will involve many difficulties, but it is hoped that with a readiness on both sides to overcome them, a satisfactory arrangement may be concluded. Many more details remain still to be considered and settled if an agreement is arrived at on the general lines indicated above, such as the manner in which the scheme is to be brought into operation, the settlement of the financial details, &c.

My Lords will accordingly await a further expression of opinion from the Commonwealth Government upon the scheme generally before proceeding to consider such further details.

I am to add that their Lordships understand that the question of the position of the present local defence force and of the Royal Naval Reserves will be considered separately and independently of the scheme referred to in this letter.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

(sd) W. GRAHAM GREENE.

APPENDIX I.

SCHEME TO INCREASE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IMPERIAL NAVY TO PROVIDE FOR THE LOCAL COMMONWEALTH FORCE.

I. --- NUMBERS OF OFFICERS AND MEN REQUIRED.

The material is taken as:—

- 1 Depot ship for submarines.
- 9 Submarines (C. Class).
- 1 Depot ship for destroyers.
- 6 Destroyers (River Class).

10-15-14

APPENDIX II.
FIRST COST AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OF VESSELS.
(Payments to be made by the Commonwealth Government direct.)

First Cost:—	
Depôt ship for submarines	£150,000
Guns (8 6-pounders) and outfit of naval ordnance stores	<u>4,000</u>
	<u>£154,000</u>
Annual Maintenance, &c.:—	
Repairs, sea stores, fuel, naval ordnance stores, &c	£10,750
Depreciation (one-twentieth of £154,000)	<u>£7,700</u>
	<u>£18,450</u>
First Cost:—	
9 Submarines at £50,800 each	£457,200
Outfit of naval stores at £750 each	£6,750
Outfit of torpedoes (7 each boat)	£32,000
	<u>£495,950</u>
	Say, <u>£496,000</u>
Annual Maintenance, &c.:—	
Repairs, sea stores, petrol, naval ordnance stores, &c	£20,000
Depreciation (one-fifteenth of £495,950)	<u>£33,000</u>
	<u>£53,000</u>
First Cost: —	
Depot ship for destroyers	£150,000
Guns (8 6-pounders) and naval ordnance stores	<u>£4,000</u>
	<u>£154,000</u>
Annual Maintenance, &c.: —	
Repairs, sea stores, coal, naval ordnance stores, &c	£10,750
Depreciation (one-twentieth of £154,000)	<u>£7,700</u>
	<u>£18,450</u>
First Cost:—	
6 River Class destroyers at £76,500 each	£459,000
Outfit of naval stores at £750 each	£4,500
Guns (4 12-pounders) and naval ordnance stores	<u>£10,000</u>
	<u>£473,500</u>
Annual Maintenance, &c.:—	
Repairs, sea stores, coal, naval ordnance stores, &c	£64,500
Depreciation (one-fifteenth of £473,500)	<u>£31,600</u>
	<u>£96,100</u>

Summary.

—	First Cost	Annual Maintenance and Depreciation
	£	£
Depot ship for submarines	154,000	18,450
9 submarines (C. Class)	496,000	53,000
Depot ship for destroyers	154,000	18,450
6 River Class destroyers	473,000	96,100
Total	1,277,500	186,000

APPENDIX III.

Personnel.

1. —Annual Charges to be paid by the Commonwealth Government direct.

1. It is understood that the additional officers required will number 79, the ranks being those given in the attached schedule, and that 78 will be continuously employed in the Australian Flotilla, one captain being on half-pay.

On this basis it is estimated that the direct charges to be met by Australia in respect of the officers will be as follows:—

For 78 officers:—

	per annum.
Pay and allowance.....	£18,786
Extra pay (hard lying money and submarine pay).....	2,518
Victualling at 10d. a day.....	1,186
Medicines at 10s. a year.....	39
	<u>£22,529</u>

2. For the 975 ratings to be employed in the flotilla the direct charges will be approximately:—

	per annum.
Wages and allowances.....	£46,944
Extra pay (hard lying money and submarine pay).....	8,870
Victualling at 10d. a day.....	14,829
Medicines at 10s. a year.....	487
	<u>£71,130</u>

3. The Commonwealth will also pay directly the recruiting staff proposed, viz., 1 warrant officer and 1 petty officer (pensioners). The charge will, it is calculated, amount to £350 per annum.

This is exclusive of the cost of the office and other recruiting expenses.

II.—Annual Charge to be refunded by Australia in the form of a Subsidy in respect of Liabilities incurred by Imperial Funds.

1. Half-pay of the additional captain, say, £265 per annum.

2. Retired Pay, Pensions, and Gratuities.—The liability on this account has been calculated on the basis usually employed, but it will be necessary to refer the

rates to an actuary for revision before the estimate on this account is finally settled. For the present purpose the following figures may be taken:—

	per annum.
79 Officers	£9,760
1,125 Men	<u>20,970</u>
	<u>£30,730</u>

A certain additional liability will also be incurred in respect of widow's pensions, educational grants to children, &c. There are not materials, however, for estimating the charge, but £1,000 per annum has been taken to cover the cost.

3. *The annual subsidy will also have to include the cost of such training of officers and men as is carried out in the establishments at home. The estimated charges are as follows:—*

(a) Cadets—

Cost of training cadets, based on the numbers required to be entered annually for the purpose of making good waste (say 5).

The average annual charge under this head (*i.e.*, for 20 cadets, each of whom will undergo four years' training) will be

.....	£2,410
(b) Additional boys (seaman class)	2,160
(c) Additional boys (artificer)	768
(d) Additional mechanics	2
Per annum	<u>£3,128</u>
Total for training	<u>£5,538</u>

The figures at (b), (c), (d) include proportion of establishment charges, pay, victualling, medicines, clothing, &c.

4. *Passage Charges.*—Assuming that 600 officers and men be relieved annually in one party by *hired freight* the annual expense on their account would amount to £20,500, of which it is considered one-half should be payable by the Commonwealth Government.

III.—*Charges which may have to be defrayed by Australia direct or be refunded to Imperial Votes.*

Over and above the items detailed above there are certain charges which cannot on present information be allocated between headings I. and II., *e.g.*, the charge for the pay, &c., of reliefs might fall direct upon Imperial Votes or Australian Votes according to circumstances. Probably it may be found most convenient to add the charge to the subsidy.

Pay, &c., in respect of crossing reliefs.—Although it is not proposed to increase the establishment of officers for relief purposes, it is considered that Australia should bear a proportion of the liability as in the case of the men. On this assumption, the charge may be taken as 15 per cent. of the items detailed above as representing the cost of pay, wages, allowances, victualling, and medicines of Officers and men. The figures will be:—

In respect of officers	£3,003
In respect of men	<u>9,340</u>
	<u>£12,343</u>

IV.—*Addition of a Sum to cover variations in Rates of Pay. &c.*

In order to cover contingencies which may arise, either before or after the new arrangement is settled, an addition should be made to the estimate. Without such a margin Imperial funds may have to bear the cost of improvements in effective or non-effective pay or of unavoidable variations due to the advancement of ranks and ratings in such a way as would involve differences between the numbers proposed and those actually borne. This expense has been estimated at 5 per cent. on full pay and allowances and non-effective pay, the additional charge for which would be approximately £5,450, distributed as follows:—

—	Effective Pay.	Non-effective Pay.
	£	£
Officers	1,165	487 per annum
Men	2,790	1,053 "
Total.....	3,955	1,540 "
	£5,495 per annum	

A statement follows summarising the annual charges in respect of personnel:—

	<i>Annual</i>	
	I.	
(1)	£22,529	
(2)	£71,130	
(3)	<u>£350</u>	
		£94,009
	II.	
(1)	£265	
(2)	£31,730	
(3)	<u>£5,538</u>	
		£37,533
Passages on relief		£10,250
	III.	
(1)	£12,343	12,343
	IV.	
(1)		<u>5,495</u>
		<u>£159,630</u>
Total annual charge in respect of personnel (say)		£160,000

Private letter from Vice Admiral Richard Poore to First Lord of the Admiralty
Reginald McKenna, 8 March 1909 - McKenna Mss, 3/9

HMS Powerful,
Australia Station.
Hobart, Tasmania.
8 March 09.

Dear Mr. McKenna,

In your last letter you said you would like to hear of the new Commonwealth Ministry. As Parliament is not sitting it has been difficult to get much insight into their doings, but yesterday I had half an hours talk with Mr. Fisher, the Prime Minister, was instructive.

He is a shrewd man of the people: quiet and conscious of his lack of training for the post he holds. I should think he has a fair share of obstinacy but in the hands of a clever man would be easily led. Not a great leader, nor will he ever be. One of his first utterances yesterday gives a clear idea of his general imperial policy. He said "there is a growing idea that a great empire cannot be governed or controlled by one central power and therefore it is the duty of each colony to take care of itself and be entirely self supporting and capable of undertaking its own defence".

He said that he supposed I had heard of his decision to begin the formation of an "Australian Navy". I replied that I had seen something to that effect in the papers (which is all that I had seen). He seemed to have no doubts on the subject of building and upkeep of the proposed destroyers: nor as to their manning, training and general efficiency as a force totally apart from the Imperial Navy.

In answer to a question he told me he was in communication with the Admiralty with regard to building the destroyers and was acting generally under Admiralty advice. This I take leave to doubt.

I tried him with the remark that I did not believe in isolated efforts for local defence which were not a part of some general scheme for imperial necessity. This led to the reply that each colony must defend itself and must encourage the military spirit of the people: and that in the history of the world, the countries which were dependant on the control of a central governing Power were short lived & c. & c.

I mentioned that it would not be easy to find officers and men in Australia, nor would it be easy to keep up the efficiency of any torpedo force unless there were some means of arranging for a flow of trained officers and men through the force to prevent stagnation of ideas. These matters, however, he seemed to think would arrange themselves.

I mention these things to show you the train of thought which is in the minds of the politicians of this type in Australia when they think of Australian Naval Defence.

He does not think imperially. That their very existence depends on their communications being kept open, does not appear worthy of consideration.

A destroyer at Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle, and port Darwin, and Australia and its sea borne commerce is safe.

As I have often written to Green, a certain type of Australian politician wants an Australian Navy: Australia does not want an Australian Navy.

I do not know whether this Commonwealth Govt. is in communication with the Admiralty or not: but my opinion is this.

It is no earthly use going any further than the last Admiralty memo which clearly lays down reasonable ideas for the establishment of a Colonial Naval Force. As far as I know, there has been no reply of any kind sent to that Memo.

I have after a years experience, come to the conclusion that the Australians who are being trained as seamen are excellent material and the Imperial Officers who have trained them in this Squadron deserve great credit for their work. The men are intelligent, smart and of excellent physique, but they do not take to sea life.

This year completes the first period of 5 years under the agreement and the term expired men take their discharge (I have sent in an official letter as to numbers &c.). I do not think one single man will reengage for a further period: there is no discontent but they have had enough.

The Australian is not a seaman by instinct. There are no sea traditions: no Australian deeds at sea. Their romance lies, not in the sea, but in "the Bush".

Boys literature teems with stories of "the Bush": pioneers, explorers: bushrangers: gold fevers &c.

No Australian boy runs away from school to go to sea: he runs away to bush life: gets tired of it later on, and comes back to swell the population of the towns.

Mr. Deakin has been hereabouts, speaking at different meetings and leaving his audiences cold.

He is at present sitting on the fence, holding out hands to Mr. Fisher and the Leader of the Opposition alternate—I think he will eventually find a resting place in the ditch.

With kind regards,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Richard Poore.

Imperial Conference on Defence – Memorandum by Reginald McKenna,
20 July 1909 - PRO: CAB 37/100/98.

ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM.

On the 16th March of this year statements were made on the growing strength of foreign navies by the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty on the introduction of the Navy Estimates for 1909–10.

On the 22nd March the Government of New Zealand telegraphed an offer to bear the cost of the immediate construction of a battleship of the latest type and of a second of the same type if necessary. This offer was gratefully accepted by His Majesty's Government. On the 29th March the Canadian House of Commons passed a resolution recognising the duty of Canada, as the country increased in numbers and wealth, to assume in a larger measure the responsibilities of national defence, and approving of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organisation of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial Navy. On the 15th April Mr. Fisher, the Prime Minister of the Australian Government, telegraphed that, whereas all the British Dominions ought to share in the burden of maintaining the permanent naval supremacy of the Empire, so far as Australia was concerned this object would best be attained by the encouragement of naval development in that country. (On Mr Deakin succeeding Mr Fisher as Prime Minister a further telegram was sent on the 4th June, offering the Empire an Australian "Dreadnought" or such addition to its naval strength as may be determined after consultation in London.

In view of these circumstances, His Majesty's Government considered the time was appropriate for the holding of a Conference to discuss afresh the relations of the Dominions to the United Kingdom in regard to the question of Imperial defence, and on the 30th April sent an invitation to the Defence Ministers of the four Dominions and the Cape Colonies to attend a Conference under the terms of Resolution I of the Conference of 1907, to discuss the general question of the naval and military defence of the Empire, with special reference to the Canadian resolution and to the proposals from New Zealand and Australia.

2. If the problem of Imperial naval defence were considered merely as a problem of naval strategy it would be found that the maximum output of strength for a given expenditure is obtained by the maintenance of a single navy with the concomitant unity of training and unity of command. In furtherance, then, of the simple strategical ideal the maximum of power would be obtained if all parts of the Empire contributed, according to their needs and resources, to the maintenance of the British Navy.

3. It has long been recognised that in defining the conditions under which the naval forces of the Empire should be developed, other considerations than those of strategy alone must be taken into account. The various circumstances of the oversea Dominions have to be borne in mind. Though all have in them the seeds of a great advance in population, wealth, and power, they have at the present time attained to

different stages in their growth. Their geographical position has subjected them to internal and external strains, varying in kind and intensity. Their history and physical environment have given rise to individual national sentiment, for the expression of which room must be found. A simple contribution of money or materiel may be to one dominion the most acceptable form in which to assist in Imperial defence. Another, while ready to provide local naval forces, and to place them at the disposal of the Crown in the event of war, may wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of its own could be raised. A third may think that the best manner in which it can assist in promoting the interests of the Empire is in undertaking certain local services not directly of a naval character, but which may relieve the Imperial Government from expenses which would otherwise fall on the British Exchequer.

4. The main duty of the forthcoming Conference as regards naval defence will be, therefore, to determine the form in which the various Dominion Governments can best participate in the burden of Imperial defence with due regard to varying political and geographical conditions. Looking to the difficulties involved, it is not to be expected that the discussions with the several Defence Ministers will result in a complete and final scheme of naval defence, but it is hoped that it will be found possible to formulate the broad principles upon which the growth of Colonial naval forces should be fostered. While laying the foundations of future Dominion navies to be maintained in different parts of the Empire, these forces would contribute immediately and materially to the requirements of Imperial defence.

5. In the opinion of the Admiralty, a Dominion Government desirous of creating a navy should aim at forming a distinct fleet unit; and the smallest unit is one which, while manageable in time of peace, is capable of being used in its component parts in time of war.

6. Under certain conditions the establishment of local defence flotillas, consisting of torpedo craft and submarines, might be of assistance in time of war to the operations of the fleet, but such flotilla cannot co-operate on the high seas in the wider duties of protection of trade and preventing attacks from hostile cruisers and squadrons. The operations of destroyers and torpedo boats are necessarily limited to the waters near the coast or to a radius of action not far distant from a base, while there are great difficulties in manning such a force and keeping it always thoroughly efficient.

A scheme limited to torpedo craft would not in itself, moreover, be a good means of gradually developing a self-contained fleet capable of both offence and defence. Unless a naval force—whatever its size—complies with this condition, it can never take its proper place in the organisation of an Imperial navy distributed strategically over the whole area of British interests.

7. The fleet unit to be aimed at should, in the opinion of the Admiralty, consist of the following:—

- 1 Armoured cruiser (new "Indomitable" class, which is of the "Dreadnought" type),
- 3 Unarmoured cruisers ("Bristol" class),
- 6 Destroyers,
- 3 Submarines,

with the necessary auxiliaries, such as *dépôt* and stores ships, &c.

Such a fleet unit would be capable of action not only in the defence of coasts, but also of the trade routes, and would be sufficiently powerful to deal with small hostile squadrons should such ever attempt to act in those waters.

8. *Simply to man such a squadron, omitting auxiliary requirements and any margin for reliefs, sickness, &c., the minimum numbers required would be about 2,000 officers and men, according to the Admiralty scheme of complements, including—*

- 1 Rear-Admiral or Commodore and staff,
- 1 Captain,
- 4 Commanders,
- 43 Lieutenants and Sub-Lieutenants,
- 16 Engineer officers,

besides Medical and Accountant officers and warrant and petty officers of the various classes.

9. The estimated first cost of building and arming the class of ships indicated would be—

	£
"Indomitable" (new)	2,000,000
"Bristol"	350,000*
Destroyer (River class)	80,000*
Submarine (C class)	55,000*

* May have to be increased

It is difficult to estimate the annual cost of maintenance (*i.e.*, upkeep of hull and machinery, sea stores, fuel, &c.) under the new conditions contemplated, but it may be taken that it would amount approximately to—

	£
"Indomitable"	52,000
"Bristol"	16,500
Destroyer (River class)	10,700
Submarine (C class)	2,300

It is also difficult to estimate the amount which should represent interest and depreciation on first cost. The life of the "Indomitable" and "Bristol" classes may be estimated at 20 years and that of the destroyers and submarines at 15 years, but the

amount to be calculated on this basis would vary according to the rate of interest prevailing in each country. It has not, therefore, been included.

The total first cost, accordingly, of building and arming a fleet unit apart from auxiliaries would be:—

	£
1 "Indomitable" (new)	2,000,000
3 "Bristols"	1,050,000
6 Destroyers (River class)	480,700
3 Submarines (C class)	<u>165,000</u>
	3,695,000

and the annual cost of maintenance would be:—

	£
1 "Indomitable"	52,000
3 "Bristols"	49,500
6 Destroyers (River class)	64,200
3 Submarines (C class)	<u>6,900</u>
	172,600

10. The above annual figures do not include the cost of personnel, which should be added to the annual charge of maintenance. The active-service pay of 2,000 officers and men, and their victualling and other like expenses, would amount approximately to 156,000/ a year, calculated on the rates payable in the Royal Navy only.

It will be noticed that, as in the case of the matériel of the fleet unit, the estimated cost of the personnel required to man the ships does not comprise the whole cost. There would be other charges to be provided for, such as the pay of persons employed in subsidiary services, those undergoing training, sick, in reserve, &c.

11. As the armoured cruiser is the essential part of the fleet unit, it is important that an "Indomitable" of the "Dreadnought" type should be the first vessel to be built in commencing the formation of a fleet unit. She should be officered and manned as far as possible by Colonial officers and men, supplemented by the loan of Imperial officers and men who might volunteer for the service. While on the station the ship would be under the exclusive control of the Dominion Government as regards her movements and general administration, but officers and men would be governed by regulations similar to the King's Regulations, and be under naval discipline. The question of pay and allowances would have to be settled on lines the most suitable to each Dominion Government concerned.

12. It is recognised that to carry out completely such a scheme as that indicated would ultimately mean a greater charge for naval defence than that which the Dominions have hitherto borne; but on the other hand, the building of a "Dreadnought" (or its equivalent), which certain Governments have offered to undertake, would form part of the scheme, and therefore, as regards the most expensive item of the shipbuilding programme suggested, no additional cost to those Governments would be involved.

13. *Pari passu* with the creation of the fleet unit, it would be necessary to consider the development of local resources in everything which relates to the maintenance of a fleet. A careful enquiry should be made into the shipbuilding and repairing establishments with a view to their general adaptation to the needs of the local squadron. Training schools for officers and men would have to be established; arrangements would have to be made for the manufacture, supply, and replenishment of the various naval, ordnance, and victualling stores required by the squadron.

14. All these requirements might be met according to the views of the Dominion Governments, in so far as the form and manner of the provision made are concerned. But as regards shipbuilding, armaments, and warlike stores, &c., on the one hand, and training and discipline in peace and war on the other, there should be one common standard. If the fleet unit maintained by a Dominion is to be treated as an integral part of the Imperial forces, with a wide range of interchangeability among its component parts with those forces, its general efficiency should be the same, and the facilities for refitting and replenishing His Majesty's ships, whether belonging to a Dominion Fleet or of the United Kingdom Fleet, should be the same. Further, as it is a *sine qua non* that successful action in time of war depends upon unity of command and direction, the general discipline must be the same throughout the whole Imperial service, and without this it would not be possible to arrange for that mutual co-operation and assistance which would be indispensable in the building up and establishing of a local naval force in close connection with the Royal Navy. It has been recognised by the Colonial Governments that in time of war the local naval forces should come under the general directions of the Admiralty.

15. The above is the scheme in its general outline, the details of which, if it meets with a favourable reception at the Conference, could be worked out by a sub-committee of representatives of the Admiralty and the Dominion Government concerned, who consider *inter alia*:—

- (a) The best means of reconciling the local control of the Dominion Government over its naval forces with the principle of unity of command in time of war.
- (b) The best means of arranging for the close connection, as regards ships and personnel, between the local and Imperial naval forces which is essential to enable these forces to attain the same standard of efficiency.
- (c) The measures requisite to give the naval forces of Dominions, acting under the orders of their own Governments, the international status of war-ships of a sovereign State.
- (d) The arrangements to be made during the transitional period pending the establishment of a complete fleet unit.

R.McK.

Admiralty, July 20, 1909.

NOTES
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE
AT THE
ADMIRALTY
ON

Tuesday, 10th August 1909.

BETWEEN

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADMIRALTY AND OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA TO CONSIDER A SCHEME FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. R.K. McKENNA, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty
(*in the chair*).

Admiral of the Fleet Sir JOHN FISHER First Lord of the Admiralty.

Rear-Admiral the Hon. A.E. BETHELL, C.M.G., Director of Naval Intelligence.

Mr. W. GRAHAM GREENE, C.B., Assistant-Secretary of the Admiralty.

Rear-Admiral Sir C.L. OTTLEY, K.C.M.G., M.V.O., Secretary to the Committee
of Imperial Defence.

Australia:

Colonel the Hon. J.F.G. FOXTON, C.M.G., Minister without Portfolio.

Captain W.R. CRESWELL, C.M.G.

Captain J.R. CHANCELLOR, D.S.O.

Assistant-Secretary to the Imperial Conference, *Secretary*.

Mr. McKENNA reminded the Australian representatives that Mr. Deakin had put forward a proposal at the end of 1907 for the establishment of a flotilla of destroyers and submarines and depot ships as the nucleus of an Australian Navy. The Admiralty had estimated that the cost of establishing and maintaining such a flotilla would amount to about 346,000*l.* a year.

Since these proposals had been put forward the Government of the Commonwealth had offered to present the Imperial Government a vessel of the "Dreadnought" type and His Majesty's Government had gratefully accepted this generous offer. The cost of a vessel of the "Dreadnought" type was about 2,000,000*l.* The life of such a vessel might be assumed to be 20 years.

Taking interest on the capital cost of 2,000,000*l.* at 3½ per cent. and allowing for a sinking fund, it might be assumed that the annual cost of a "Dreadnought" amounted to 150,000*l.* per annum.

It would thus appear that the sum available for the establishment of an Australian Navy was about 500,000*l.* per annum. i.e., 346,000*l.* the cost of Mr. Deakin's scheme

for a destroyer flotilla and 150,000*l.* the annual cost of the "Dreadnought" which the Commonwealth Government had presented to the British Government.

The question for consideration now seemed to be how that sum could best be applied for the purposes of the naval defence of the Empire.

He suggested that the Commonwealth Government should adopt the Admiralty suggestion for the establishment of a fleet unit, as described in their Memorandum laid before the Conference, for service in Australian waters.

The total cost of such a fleet unit would be from 600,000*l.* to 700,000*l.* per annum, and if the Commonwealth Government would devote the funds available for naval purposes, say 500,000*l.*, towards the establishment of such a unit, the Admiralty would undertake to pay annually the difference between this amount and the total estimated amount required for maintaining the fleet unit as agreed upon. It was proposed in connection, on the establishment of the Australian Navy, to hand over to the Commonwealth Government the Dockyard and naval establishments at Sydney, on which the Admiralty had expended many millions of pounds.

The arrangement proposed by the Admiralty would come into force at the termination of the existing naval agreement. The existing agreement would terminate in 1913 and would not in all probability be renewed.

The fleet unit which it was proposed to establish would be more powerful than the squadron of cruisers now in Australian waters.

Sir JOHN FISHER stated that, from the purely naval strategic point of view, there was little to add to the Admiralty memorandum which had been laid before the members of the Imperial Conference. The Admiralty, after careful consideration of the question, had arrived at the conclusion that the establishment of fleet units, as recommended in that Memorandum, which could combine in time of war to form a powerful fleet, which he suggested might be called the Pacific Fleet, was the most advantageous course for the Dominion Governments to pursue. And this recommendation expressed the views not only of the present Board of Admiralty, but also the opinion of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur Wilson, and of the Committee of Imperial Defence. He attached great importance to the vessel of the "Indomitable" type, as the citadel or base round which the smaller vessels of the unit could operate.

Without the large vessel of the "Indomitable" type, the smaller vessels of the fleet unit would be strategically of little value, for they would not be able to deal unaided with the more powerful hostile commerce-destroyers, whereas the "Indomitable," with her great speed and radius of action, could either catch up or avoid any vessel afloat, and her gun power would enable her to deal with any hostile vessels likely to be employed in operations against our oversea trade.

Colonel FOXTON suggested, if the Commonwealth Government began with the smaller types of vessels, they would have the harbours along the coast of Australia as bases, in which they could seek refuge in time of need.

Sir JOHN FISHER pointed out that ships which had to seek the protection of forts when hostile ships appeared on the scene were useless for war, and it would be waste of money to provide small vessels unless they were supported by an "Indomitable."

The essential requirement was the provision of ships capable of dealing with hostile vessels of the types that are likely to be sent to Australian waters. The "Indomitable" class fulfilled this condition in every particular.

The smaller vessels of the fleet unit, without the "Indomitable" to fall back upon, would be a source of weakness rather than an addition to our naval strength for Imperial defence purposes, for it would probably be necessary for the Admiralty to detach "Indomitable"s to the Australian Station to save the small craft from destruction by the more powerful hostile cruisers.

No hostile cruisers of less strength would venture into Australian waters so long as there was a vessel of the "Indomitable" type on the Australian Station.

He therefore earnestly urged the Commonwealth Government, if they desired to make some real contribution to the naval defence of the Empire, not to expend money on vessels which would be valueless in war, alike for purposes of Imperial defence and for the protection of trade in Australian waters.

Colonel FOXTON stated that he was convinced by the reasoning which led the Admiralty to argue the construction of vessels of the "Indomitable" type as being most important for Imperial defence purposes. He remarked that the Commonwealth's gift of an "Indomitable" did not comprehend the maintenance of the vessel as well as its original cost. The offer was an expression of a desire on the part of the Commonwealth Government to make some contribution towards Imperial defence outside purely local defence requirements.

Captain CRESWELL stated he had no remarks to offer on Sir John Fisher's exposition of the strategic situation, but there were considerations other than immediate naval ones which the Commonwealth Government had to consider. The desire of the Australian Government was to develop a fresh centre of naval strength in Australia. They therefore wanted to be able to build their own ships, and produce locally all the essentials of a naval force. He suggested that if they were to expend their money on what he might call the foundations of naval strength—naval schools, dockyards, gun factories, and other establishments—their ultimate productive power would be much more fully developed than if they were to expend their money now on a vessel of the "Indomitable" type: such expenditure might be regarded as an investment which would bring back many "Dreadnoughts" in future years. He made this suggestion provided that there was no immediate danger and that there was no urgent need of more vessels of the "Indomitable" type.

Sir JOHN FISHER pointed out that, although there was, perhaps, no immediate danger, the crisis would come in four or five years' time, and vessels of the "Indomitable" type took two years or more to build. He understood that it was in view of this approaching crisis that the Australian offer of a "Dreadnought" had been made. If Captain Creswell's suggestion to spend the money now available on shore establishments were adopted, any "Indomitable"s that might ultimately be built as the result of these measures would not be available until long after the critical time had passed.

Mr. McKENNA pointed out that under the existing naval agreement we now maintained in Australian waters a squadron the total cost of which was some

900,000/ per annum, towards which Australia and New Zealand contributed 240,000/.

These vessels were maintained in Australian waters purely in the interests of Australia; and, if the Admiralty were not compelled under the naval agreement to maintain them there, these vessels would be withdrawn, and a considerable saving on naval votes would thereby be effected.

He pointed out that the Japanese alliance might terminate in 1915. By that time the Japanese and German fleets would be very formidable, and the position of Australia in the event of war might be one of some danger.

The question was, therefore, whether the Commonwealth Government would organise their naval forces in such a way that they would be able to afford us some assistance in war, or whether they would leave the whole of the burden of Imperial defence to be borne by the British Admiralty.

The burden of armaments was falling with increasing weight upon the British Government, and the Admiralty might not be able to continue indefinitely to bear the burden of the heavy responsibilities now laid upon them for the naval defence of the Empire.

The situation of Australia was somewhat different from that of Canada. Australia was geographically isolated and remote from the centres of British naval strength, whereas the power of the British fleets could easily be brought to bear in the Western Atlantic for the defence of Canada. Moreover Canada gained a certain measure of security against aggression from the "Munro Doctrine" as laid down by the United States, which no Power will readily infringe.

Sir JOHN FISHER pointed out that an essential condition in the establishment of a local navy on a permanent basis was that the service should offer a career to the officers. If the conditions of service did not provide for this, efficiency could not be maintained. If the Australian Navy was composed entirely of small craft there was no possibility of providing suitable employment for the senior officers.

Captain CRESWELL suggested that the Navy did not exist to provide careers for the officers; moreover, there were outside appointments, such as harbour master-ships, which would be open to senior officers. If the Commonwealth Government first built the small vessels, appointments for senior officers in larger vessels would be available in a squadron like the one under the naval agreement, as at present.

Sir JOHN FISHER pointed out that the naval agreement terminated in 1913, so it offered no solution of the difficulty. The Australian squadron, as at present constituted, provided a naval force of little value for Imperial defence. In view of the heavy burdens thrown upon the Admiralty by the increase in the number of first class naval Powers, they cannot afford to maintain squadrons except for purposes of war. So long as we bore the cost we claimed the right of disposing of our forces in accordance with the needs of the strategic situation.

It was not generally realised how recent inventions had revolutionised naval warfare. The need for the smaller classes of cruisers was greatly diminished by the invention of wireless telegraphy.

Whereas formerly it was necessary to have a large number of these vessels as antennae and for the communication of information, their role is now to a great extent

filled by wireless telegraphy, by means of which it is possible to send messages to vessels at a distance of 1,500 miles. He had laid emphasis on the large vessels of the "Indomitable" type, as these vessels were essential to meet the crisis that was anticipated in a few years time.

Captain CRESWELL stated his proposals were made provided there was no urgency of the nature represented.

Colonel FOXTON stated that the proposals of the Admiralty appealed to him strongly, and he believed that they would be favourably received in Australia, as the people would realise that they were taking a share in their Imperial responsibilities. He was, however, doubtful if so large a sum as 500,000*l.* would be available annually. He said that before proceeding to work out the details of scheme for the establishment of a fleet unit, he would like to obtain Mr. Deakin's approval to the general lines of the scheme proposed by the Admiralty.

As regards the education of officers he considered that it would probably be necessary to establish schools of the Osborne and Dartmouth type in Australia, as, owing to the great distance, parents were generally reluctant to send their sons to England at the age of twelve.

He highly approved of the suggestion that the fleet to be formed by the assembly of the fleet units on the Australian, China, and East India stations should be called the Pacific Fleet, and he thought that the adoption of this title might tend to induce Canada to establish a fleet unit on the Pacific coast in the future.

It was decided that the Admiralty should draft a memorandum explaining briefly their proposals, for Colonel Foxton to communicate to Mr. Deakin by telegraph, with a view to obtaining his sanction to the Australian representatives proceeding to work out the details of a schedule for the establishment of an Australian Navy consisting of one fleet unit, the cost of which, up to 500,000*l.*, should be borne by the Commonwealth Government, and the balance between this amount and an estimate of total annual cost to be agreed upon should be defrayed by the Imperial Government. The unit to be under the control of the Commonwealth Government in peace and to join with the units on the China and India stations in time of war, to form the Pacific Fleet.

The Conference will reassemble in about a week when the details of the schedule have been worked out.

Captain Creswell's views on result of Imperial Conference, 16 November 1909
-reprinted in Macandie, *Genesis of the Royal Australian Navy*, p. 250-54.

The following proposal was provisionally accepted by the Commonwealth Government:—

The Australian Government to provide one Fleet Unit composed as follows:—

- 1 Armoured Cruiser ("Indefatigable" type). Speed, nominal—25 knots.
Armament—8 12-in guns.
- 3 Improved "Bristols"—Unarmoured cruisers. Speed, 25 knots. Armament 8
6-in. guns.
- 6 Torpedo Boat Destroyers (River Class)—25 knots.
- 3 Submarines ("C" class.)

It was the opinion of the Admiralty that the "Indefatigable" should be laid down at once, as she will take the longest time to build, and that the laying down of the other vessels should be so timed that all would be completed together.

**Imperial Conference on Defence, 1909. – Advantages Gained by Adoption of the
 New Proposals (Naval).**

Any measure of Imperial Defence affords protection directly or indirectly to Australia, and any measure of Australian Defence relieves and lightens the Imperial effort and responsibility. They cannot be considered apart, but for present purposes it will be convenient to explain first the result to Australia of the Naval proposals.

I. The Security of Trade.

In a naval war, whether against a strong or weak Naval power, commerce destruction will always be attempted. No Naval blockade can prevent the escape of commerce raiding cruisers, and their most profitable field will be at the greatest distance from the main fleets and operations of war. The recent decision of the Hague Conference legalising the commissioning of merchant steamers as ships of war, whether at sea or in their own home ports, facilitates this form of attack. It is easy to foresee that a power possessing a considerable mercantile steam fleet scattered over the globe could inflict great damage if, on a date secretly prearranged for the declaration of war, these vessels became commerce destroyers in whatever part of the world they might chance or had arranged to be. The Fleet Unit proposed for Australia will ensure safety to our commerce against any such attack.

II. Safety from Attack of a Squadron.

Further, in any war against any European power or possible combination of powers, no possible enemy could afford to detach to these seas a squadron superior in force to the units proposed.

III. Defence of the Ocean Trade Routes.

Although the special conditions of Australian sea trade and the dependence of industrial life of the Commonwealth upon its security demand such special measures for its defence, we shall notwithstanding this be able to cover also the ocean trade

routes between Australia and its nearest oversea ports. This duty we shall share with the other British Fleet units stationed in the Eastern Seas and the Pacific.

(It is proper and in accord with the growing importance of Australia that we should take our part in the Naval security of the Pacific)

The bombardment of our ports or the possibility of their being held to ransom will, with a Naval Defence of the strength proposed, be so remote as to be hardly worth considering.

IV. Attacks in Force—Expeditionary Attacks on Australia

An attack in force upon Australia for the seizure of territory may come within the practical consideration by a Pacific power if Great Britain be held to Europe by war with any European powers, but before any such expedition could be launched against Australia the Pacific Squadrons of three Fleet Units would have to be accounted for. The capture or rendering harmless of such a fleet would be an operation of some difficulty, requiring the constant operation of a considerable force for a considerable time. No attempt at a landing in force in Australia would be made while these vessels remained in existence—a formidable danger either to the transports of the main expedition or to those carrying supplies upon which the expeditionary force must rely after landing.

The time gained by this delay would be of invaluable service in preparing our defence.

1. Total Obligation of Oversea Dominions Assumed at Conference

2. Total Eastern Fleet when complete

3. How the Fighting Value of the New unit compares with the Present Australian Squadron.

	Present Squadron.	New Australian Unit.
Vessels	9	13
Guns, 4-in. and over	90	54
Weight of metal from guns	6,120 lb.	9,750 lb.
Torpedo Tubes	21	35
Complement	3,218	2,283
Average speed	20.4 knots	25.6 knots

The armoured cruiser alone will have a heavier weight of metal than the existing squadron. The heaviest gun in the present squadron is a 9.2-inch with a projectile of 380 lb. The new armoured cruiser will carry eight 12-in. guns, with a projectile of 850 lb.

The flagship of the present squadron is a 1st class protected cruiser, with a protected deck with armour from 3 to 6 inches, and 6 inch armour protecting the gun

positions. The flagship of the new unit will have a complete armoured belt of 4 to 7 inches, with 8 inches protecting the heavy gun positions.

Complement

It will be noted that about 1,000 men will be released for the general purposes of the Navy under the new scheme.

Comparison

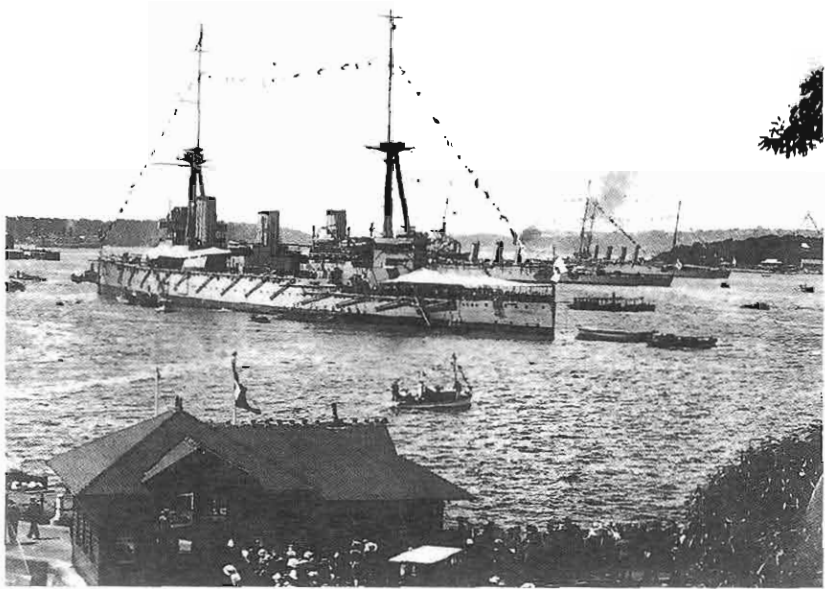
From Jane's "Fighting Ships", the "Indomitable" war value is 70 (the "Dreadnought" being the unit, that is, 100). The present Australian squadron, taken as new totals on the same basis 53 in all.

4. How Much does Great Britain Save in Money.

According to a statement at the Conference, Great Britain expends £950,000 on upkeep of present Australian Squadron and the Sydney base. That includes a proportion of Central Administration expenses. Australia pays Great Britain £200,000 per annum, therefore she is, so far as Australia is concerned, £750,000 out of pocket. She will now pay Australia, say, £250,000 per annum* [Mr. Fisher decided against this] and will therefore save £500,000 per annum. She gets available for service also a fleet unit whose strength is shown in (3).

5. Details of £750,000 Annual Cost of Maintenance, Australian New Unit.

£177,000	Pay, victualling, etc. (English rates).
£173,000	Upkeep of hulls, maintenance, etc.
<u>£259,000</u>	Interest and sinking fund.
£600,000	
<u>£141,000</u>	Extra Australian rates pay, shore establishments, etc.
<u>£750,000</u>	



The scene at Farm Cove during the official welcome to the new units of the Royal Australian Navy on 4 October 1913. (RAN)

Appendix 1

'Status of Colonial Ships of War, 1910-11' - PRO: ADM 116/1100C, f.64-82.

Report of Inter-Departmental Conference on Status of Dominion Ships of War
June 1910.

Part II.—GENERAL STATEMENT OF POSITION.

16. According to Admiralty letter of the 4th January, 1910, the *Inter-departmental Conference was invited to consider—*

(a.) The measures requisite to give Colonial Naval Forces the international status of war-ships of sovereign State.

(b.) The means of employing Colonial Naval Forces on Imperial services in time of peace as well as war.

For the sake of convenience the latter problem will be taken first, as the former presents no great difficulties.

17. The consideration of this problem raises important issues, and before dealing with them it should be explained by way of preface that the problem as stated has not hitherto been directly presented to His Majesty's Government on behalf of the Dominions. It is, however, the express desire of the Governments of Canada and of Australia that their naval forces should be under similar discipline, and should act in close co-operation with the Royal Navy; and this desire involves a discussion of some, at least, of the considerations and practical difficulties which are inherent in the problems raised by the Admiralty letter.

18. Three matters in particular require most careful investigation—

The first is the question of the legal position of ships of the Dominion Navies when beyond territorial waters, and it is a matter for consideration how far Imperial legislation may be required to supplement Dominion legislation or to give it validity beyond territorial waters.

19. The second is the method by which and the extent to which uniform discipline should be maintained. Homogeneous discipline appears to be necessary on several important grounds. In order that the Dominion naval forces may be of full value in time of war, it is essential that they should be under similar discipline and training in time of peace. The fact that Imperial officers and men are to be lent for service in the Dominion ships, and interchanged with their officers and men is another reason, for the Admiralty would find some difficulty in justifying their action except on conditions of uniformity. The need for uniformity is even greater if the ships of the Dominions are to be employed on Imperial service, and to undergo training with ships of the Royal Navy.

20. The Australian Defence Acts 1903-9 with the regulations made thereunder, provide a naval disciplinary code of a far less stringent character than is considered necessary for the effective maintenance of discipline in the Royal Navy. These Acts were not passed in reference to proposals similar to the present, but had in view the small local defence forces previously established: but it is considered useful to refer to

them and to a Memorandum prepared in 1908, without any direct reference to the questions now under consideration, by the Judge Advocate of the Fleet (Mr. Acland, K.C.). This Memorandum indicates the serious nature of the considerations involved in the question of discipline, and shows the policy which was then followed by the Commonwealth Government. (See Appendix III.)

22. The third matter for consideration is that, while the Dominion ships are intended mainly for local requirements and not specially for Imperial service in time of peace, yet as a mobile force they will naturally be continually passing beyond territorial waters, and will, therefore, be liable to come into contact with Foreign national ships, and also with other British ships of war; accordingly their positions will have to be regulated and defined. The question of the nature and extent of the control of the Admiralty, to be exercised with the consent of the Dominion Governments over the naval forces when outside territorial waters, requires to be determined.

23. The question of the position of a Dominion naval force in its relation to the Royal Navy and the navies of foreign nations cannot be considered altogether apart from the geographical conditions in which a Dominion is placed or the circumstances of peace and war. For instance, Australia is an island continent thousands of miles from contact with the possessions of any powerful foreign nation, excepting a few islands occupied by Germany and France in the Pacific. Canada, on the other hand, has a land frontier coterminous for thousands of miles with that of the United States, including the great lakes and, like the United States, has maritime interests both on the Atlantic and on the Pacific Oceans.

24. The circumstances of peace and war also involve different problems, of which those connected with war are capable of easier solution than those arising in time of peace, owing to the fact that, judging from the statements of responsible representatives of the self-governing Dominions, there would be no hesitation on the part of the Dominion Governments in placing their naval forces at the disposal of the Admiralty in any war in which the integrity or security of the Empire was endangered. It is proposed to confine the discussion mainly to administration in time of peace. The effect of a state of war upon the conclusions arrived at will be stated at the end of our report.

25. The problem presented by the proposed establishment of naval forces by the Dominions is unique, and it became evident at the very outset of our enquiry that there was no precedent in history to which an appeal could be made in determining the status of a naval force provided and maintained by a separate community which is not at the same time a Sovereign State. It has been necessary, therefore, to examine exhaustively the case in all its bearings, and give consideration to each of the possible alternative policies which His Majesty's Government might see fit to recommend to the Dominion Governments concerned.

26. The question of the manner and extent of the employment of Dominion ships on Imperial service seems to turn largely upon the code of discipline that would govern them, because, unless there is some sanction which the Imperial Government can enforce there is no means by which the personnel of the new mobile forces which are being brought into existence, capable of voyaging anywhere, can be punished in the event of want of compliance with the orders of the Central Government. Further, for reasons which will be apparent from a perusal of what follows, if the Royal Navy and Dominion naval forces are to act together as one fleet or to be anything more than

quasi-foreigners to one another when they meet, it is essential that, if possible, the same disciplinary code should be applied to each component part.

27. Thus it was agreed as regards Australia last year, when the conferences took place between the representatives of the Admiralty and the Commonwealth, that while in peace and on the Australian station the ships maintained by Australia should be under the exclusive control of the Commonwealth as regards movements and general administration, the officers and men would be under naval discipline, and when with ships of the Royal Navy the senior officer would take command of the whole.

28. The kind of difficulties which would almost inevitably arise if there were no common discipline may be illustrated as follows:—

- (1.) Suppose the Central Government desired for international reasons to prevent a ship of war from proceeding to a particular port, there would be no power to punish the Captain who, in defiance of a distinct order not to visit that port, might proceed there.
- (2.) Suppose a ship of the Royal Navy and a ship of a Dominion naval force were together in some harbour outside the Dominion, is there a "Senior Officer"? Could the Captain of either order the other to proceed on any service, and if the latter did not, would he be amenable to the penalties prescribed by section of the Naval Discipline Act? If he were not so amenable, the position thus created would obviously be very undesirable and would not enhance the prestige of the Imperial naval forces.
- (3.) Suppose a seaman of the Royal Navy on shore in a Dominion attacked and struck a Captain of a Dominion ship in uniform, would he have struck his "superior officer" and be amenable to the penalties imposed by section 16 of the Naval Discipline Act? If the position were reversed, and in the same port a Dominion seaman struck the Captain of a ship of the Royal Navy, would he be liable for having struck his "superior officer," and would he, in the case of Australia, only be liable to be fined 5s. by his Commanding Officer under the regulations promulgated under the Commonwealth Defence Acts, or to receive a sentence not exceeding three months with or without hard labour from a court-martial or from a Civil Court under the same Acts and Regulations.
- (4.) Suppose the same thing happened on shore in a foreign port, as far as can be seen, there is no law under which a Dominion Parliament having no power to legislate for British subjects in foreign lands the Dominion sailor could be awarded any punishment other than such as could be indicted by the local law, while the seaman of the Royal Navy could be punished by his Captain or by a court-martial, at all events for an assault, there being no territorial limits to the powers of the Imperial Parliament to legislate for British subjects.

29. The foregoing remarks are made on the assumption that officers and men of a Dominion naval force are not to be treated as "persons in or belonging to His Majesty's Navy, and borne on the books of one of His Majesty's ships in Commission," within section 87 of the Naval Discipline Act. If they are not to be so treated, it follows that until some further legislative provision is made, the Admiralty would have no disciplinary control over the personnel of a Dominion naval force, and

that a commissioned officer of the Royal Navy is not the superior officer of even an ordinary seaman of a Dominion force.

30. From the above it will be evident that the fundamental question connected with discipline to be considered is this:—

Is it desirable that the Dominion ships should become subject to the Naval Discipline Act so that the officers and men should be treated as "in or belonging to His Majesty's Navy, and borne on the books of one of His Majesty's Ships in Commission." This is a matter of policy, but if it is decided that it is not practicable, then it involves the acceptance of the view that a self-governing Dominion would have the power to create a navy which could act independently of the Imperial Government. It must be recognised, moreover, that international difficulties of a very grave nature may arise, owing to the fact that a mobile armed force has been called into existence, over whose action the Central Government would have no control, though the ultimate responsibility would rest with them.

31. In considering the question, the following additional points must be borne in mind:—

(1.) That the matter is one which is important in peace as well as in war. Wars arise out of acts done in times of peace;

(2.) That both Australia and Canada appear to be willing that in the event of their ships becoming engaged in hostilities the officers and men should be subject to the Naval Discipline Act at present in force, and that, therefore, provision must be made for rank and command in time of war; and

(3.) That any violent change of rank and command coming into force in the early days of the stress of war is to be deprecated.

32. A decision having been arrived at on the fundamental question, it will be necessary, before coming to a conclusion as to the best steps to be taken, to obtain a clear understanding as to the existing legal powers of Dominion Governments and also to form a clear opinion of what are the main objects to be aimed at. A summary of the existing law dealing with the matter, coupled with certain observations with regard to legal points which cannot be regarded as definitely settled, will be found in the next section of our report.

33. It is considered that if possible the system adopted should secure the following, results:—

(1.) The ships must have the international status of British ships of war, and the officers the international status of officers duly commissioned by the authority of the British Crown.

(2.) The Imperial Government should be able to control any action that may be taken by the ships of a Dominion which might possibly involve the country in international difficulties. This is the most important point of all, and its attainment and observance would appear to be consistent with the representations of the Admiralty and of the Dominions as shown in the extracts printed in the Appendices.

(3.) It being evidently the desire of the Dominions to keep the ships of war provided by them as far as possible under their own control, it is desirable that the control—for international purposes—of the Imperial Government should be as restricted as possible and that the maximum power of management and control that is consistent with this safeguard should be conferred on the Dominions. In other words it is on all grounds obviously

desirable that the Imperial Government should interfere as little as possible with naval forces paid for and maintained by the Dominion Governments.

(4.) It is desirable that service in the Dominion naval forces should be such as will be likely to attract good men of all ranks. This was fully recognised by Mr. Deakin in his speech in the Commonwealth Parliament, on the 13th December 1907, of which extracts are printed in Appendix I. In that speech he pointed out that little "landlocked navies" which afforded no prospect of advancement to high commissions could not attract men of first-rate ability.

(5.) So far as varying regulations and conditions of service might permit, there should be a possibility of free interchange of ships, officers and men between the Dominion naval forces and the Royal Navy; this is especially desirable from the point of view of the Dominions.

(6.) The Dominion ships, officers and men should attain to such a degree of efficiency and prestige, and have such a system of discipline as to enable them to cooperate effectually with the Royal Navy when necessary, and to share in all the honours and privileges of that body.

V.—INTERNATIONAL STATUS.

116. The international position of the proposed Dominion naval forces does not raise any legal questions of much difficulty. All that is necessary from an international point of view is that the ships should be recognised by His Majesty as British ships of war, and should carry an appropriate flag, and that the officers should be properly commissioned under the authority of His Majesty. In paragraph 7 of the Law Officers' opinion of the 23rd December, 1908, the question is dealt with whether, under the law as it now stands, any person or body in Australia can properly commission naval officers so as to give them an international status for all purposes. The advice of the Law Officers is in substance that, although the Commonwealth Act of 1900 gives an authority only for the limited purposes which they attribute to that Act, nevertheless the Crown, by assenting to the Australian Defence Acts has authorised the issue of commissions for the purposes of those Acts, which are expressed in wider terms. The necessary authority in these cases need not be given under legislative powers, but it is open to the Sovereign by any appropriate method to give such authority as may be necessary to the Governor-General, or to the Parliament of the Commonwealth. Whether any such supplementary authority will be necessary cannot be considered as a matter of law until it has been determined whether any or what Imperial legislation is to take place with regard to the Dominion naval forces. If the general Imperial legislation which is suggested were enacted there could be no possible occasion for any further step to establish the unquestionable authority of the Dominion Governments to issue proper commissions, and to maintain fleets bearing a recognised international status as British war-ships. It will be for the Foreign Office to make the necessary notification to foreign Powers as regards these ships and any modification of the Naval flag which they might be authorised to adopt.

117. The question of the actual flag to be flown by Dominion ships of war under the new conditions contemplated should, in our opinion, be determined by the position which these vessels will occupy in relation to the Royal Navy. Under the first of the two schemes discussed, the relations of the Dominion ships to the Royal Navy

will be very intimate, and having regard to the convenience of peace administration and to efficient co-operation with the Royal Navy in time of war, it is considered that the use of the White Ensign without any distinctive badge should be offered in the first instance to the Dominion Governments. At the time of the Imperial Conference last summer, the question of the flag did not come up prominently, but certain enquiries were made by the representatives of Canada and Australia, and a wish was expressed by them that the White Ensign with the distinctive emblem of the Dominion in the fly might be sanctioned. The idea that the use of the White Ensign without any distinctive badge might be granted did not occur to the representatives of the Dominions or to the representatives of the Admiralty. It is, however, very important to foster and maintain a feeling of union between the Dominion naval forces and the Royal Navy, and if any step of the kind is taken it would be desirable that the offer should be made without delay before the ships now being completed for the Canadian and Commonwealth Governments are commissioned. It is suggested that the offer should be made as a commitment and as evidence of a wish by the mother country to treat the naval forces of the Dominions as on the same footing as the Royal Navy.

VI. WAR CONDITIONS.

118. The problem of making provision for times of war is far less difficult than that of providing for times of peace. Both Australia and Canada appear to accept the position that when the ships of the Commonwealth and of the Dominion are placed at the disposal of the Admiralty in time of war the officers and men must be subject to the Naval Discipline Act.

119. If the scheme of a united Imperial Navy be adopted no further legislation will be required beyond that which has been already indicated in reference to that scheme.

120. If the scheme of auxiliary Dominion fleets be adopted nothing more would be required than that legislation, as indicated in paragraphs 96 and 97, should be passed providing for the application by Order in Council of the Naval Discipline Act to the Dominion naval forces in time of actual or anticipated war. In view of the fact, however, that the position of a self-governing Dominion is widely different from that of the Indian Empire, it is considered that any such legislation should provide that an Order in Council should only take effect after the Dominion Government had formally placed its vessels at the disposal of the Admiralty. If appropriate words were used in the Acts it would be possible to incorporate the Dominion naval forces in the Royal Navy before the actual outbreak of hostilities—a matter of some importance in view of the necessary strategical disposition of the ships.

VII.—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

121. In the preceding remarks, we have set forth fully our views on the difficult and complicated matters referred for our consideration, and it only remains now to summarise our conclusions. From the historical account which we have given of the position of the self-governing Dominions in the matter of naval defence, it will be evident that the time has come when, in some cases at any rate, it is no longer possible to treat as a practical policy the payment by them of a money contribution, and it must be accepted that the Dominions wish to share with the Imperial Government the burden of maintaining a navy. It is therefore necessary to do all that is possible to assist the Dominions to organise their naval forces in the most efficient manner, and at

the same time it is most desirable to induce them to accept a position of such close relationship with the Royal Navy that the two will be virtually part of the same Imperial force and that the assistance of the Dominion naval forces can be invoked in carrying out Imperial services in time of peace as well as in war.

122. With this object it is essential that the Dominion Ships should have the international status of British ships of war, and that the officers should have the international status of duly commissioned British naval officers, with all the other honours of the Royal Navy.

123. Unless this policy of intimate association with the Royal Navy is pursued the Empire as a whole will gain little practical advantage from the establishment of Dominion naval forces, while those forces will lose both in prestige and efficiency. The Dominions evidently contemplate such close association and the closer this can be voluntarily made the better, in order to secure harmonious co-operation and preclude the possibility of friction within the Empire and international differences without. The advantage of close connection between a local service and the Imperial Service was recognised clearly by Mr. Deakin, the late Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth. In the speech before referred to which he delivered in the Australian House of Representatives on the 13th December, 1907 (after his return from the Imperial Conference) he stated "a small flotilla of that description would remain a thing apart not directly committed to the high standards of the Imperial Navy. I ventured, therefore, to attempt to find a means by which we should get the whole benefit of the connection with the Admiralty and the Imperial Fleet, sharing its standards, its training and its prizes, and yet maintain the Australian character of our flotilla." (See Appendix I, p. 41.) It is true that these remarks applied to proposals not identical with those which led to the adoption of the scheme of a fleet unit, but they illustrate vividly what in the opinion of one of the foremost men in Australia would be the result of establishing a naval force cut off from close connexion [sic] with the Royal Navy.

124. Since the ships are to be provided at the expense of the Dominions, it is only reasonable that it should be left to those Governments to control the administration, and, in time of peace, the disposition of the ships. In war time the ships cannot be used without the consent of the Dominion concerned, but, if used, they should be under the direction of the Admiralty. In peace time some special provision must obviously be made, or else it would be within the power of the Dominion Governments to order or permit their ships to take action in relation to foreign Powers for which the Imperial Government would be responsible, but which they would not be able to prevent or control. In such an event the Imperial Government might be seriously hampered in the control of the foreign policy of the Empire and might be committed to a policy, or even to a war, of which they did not approve. This danger is not merely academical, but may easily arise.

125. It is because of the risk of grave complications with a foreign State owing to the possibility of hasty or ill-advised action on the part of a Dominion fleet, or rather of a ship or a Commanding officer, that we consider that it would not be wise for the Imperial Government to adopt a policy of *laissez-aller* or to legalise the establishment of a Dominion fleet with uncontrolled authority to act out of its own waters. As already pointed out, the position of a fleet is different from that of a military force or from any other administrative service whose field of action is necessarily confined to its own territory; and excellent as has been the result of leaving the British Dominions

beyond the Seas to manage their internal affairs, it is altogether another matter to authorise a Dominion fleet to act independently of the Imperial Government on the high seas and in foreign waters.

126. Accordingly the result to be aimed at on this view is that while the Dominions should not either in peace or war be under an absolute obligation to permit any active use of their ships, the Imperial Government should possess both in peace and war effective means of precluding such action as in their opinion would affect foreign relations; in war this would involve the acceptance by the Dominion Governments of the principle that their naval forces would not take any action whatever, except with the approval of the Imperial Government, other than measures of self-defence within their own territorial waters.

127. Such powers on the part of the Imperial Government ought, if possible, to have a legal sanction, and not to depend merely on an agreement or understanding between the two Governments; by this is meant that the Imperial Government should have the power of taking effective disciplinary action, either by means of a court-martial or otherwise, against any officer who contravenes Admiralty orders.

128. We have referred to the alternative methods which might be adopted in securing a working union with the Royal Navy, and it is clear that if the Dominions are prepared to accept it, the alternative of a united Imperial Navy is the more satisfactory. The objections which may be raised to it are probably more apparent than real, and with full explanations it might not unreasonably be laid before the Governments of the Dominions for their acceptance, on the ground that it would best provide for:—

- (1.) The efficiency of the Dominion naval forces and the dignity of the flags;
- (2.) The interchange of Officers and men between the Dominion and Imperial services, thus providing the possibility of a career which will attract men of first rate ability to the Dominion services;
- (3.) The effective co-operation of the Dominion naval forces with the Royal Navy, whether in peace or war; and
- (4.) The avoidance of dangerous international incidents.

129. Further legislation would appear to be necessary whichever scheme may be adopted: in the case of a united Imperial Navy for the purpose of removing doubts and adapting the provisions of the Naval Discipline Act to the new conditions: in the case of auxiliary Dominion fleets, for the purpose of placing the discipline of the naval forces outside the territorial limits of the Dominions on an effective legal basis.

A. E. BETHELL.
R. B. D. ACLAND
W. E. DAVIDSON.
A. H. DENNIS.
W. GRAHAM GREENE.
H. W. JUST.
W. LANGLEY.
C. P. LUCAS.
J. S. RISLEY.

June 1910

Note.—The Conference was constituted as follows:—

Admiralty—

Rear-Admiral the Hon. A. E. Bethell, C.M.G. (Chairman), Director of Naval Intelligence.

Mr. R. B. D. Acland, K.C., Judge Advocate of the Fleet.

Mr. W. Graham Greene, C.B., Assistant Secretary of the Admiralty.

Colonial Office—

Sir Charles Lucas, K.C.M.G., C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State.

Mr. H. W. Just, C.B., C.M.G., Assistant Under-Secretary of State and Secretary to the Imperial Conference.

Mr. J. S. Risley, Legal Assistant.

Foreign Office—

Mr. W. L. F. G. Langley, C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State.

Sir W. E. Davidson, K.C.M.G., C.B., K.C., Legal Adviser to the Secretary of State.

Treasury Solicitor and King's Proctor—

Mr. A. H. Dennis, Assistant Solicitor.

June 1910

Appendix 2

Differences in pay for Australian permanent and Royal Navy personnel in 1902

Rank	Colonial Service	Royal Navy
Captain	£730 p.a.	£630 p.a.
Commander	£547. 10/0 p.a.	£365 p.a.
Lieutenant	£365 p.a.	£182. 10/0 p.a.
Chief Gunner	£273. 15/0 p.a.	£200 p.a.
Petty Officer	6/- per day	2/8 to 3/2 per day
Able Seaman	4/- per day	1/7 per day
Ordinary Seaman	3/- per day	1/3 per day
Boy	2/- per day	-/7 per day
ERA	10/- per day	5/6 to 6/6 per day
Chief Stoker	6/- per day	3/- to 5/1 per day
Stoker	5/- per day	2/- to 2/4 per day

Source: Rear Admiral Reginald Custance, 'Revised Memorandum Relative to Australia and New Zealand', in Conference of Colonial Premiers on Subject of Colonial Naval Contributions, CO 6 May 1902 - PRO: ADM 1/7610, f.498.

Appendix 3

Numbers of Royal Navy personnel manning ships on the Australia Station*

	Total Naval Personnel	Personnel in ships at Home	Personnel in ships Overseas	Personnel in ships in Australia
1885	35,865	14,618	17,293	1403
1886	36,813	13,272	18,313	1417
1887	37,551	13,408	18,459	1394
1888	40,697	13,929	20,257	1532
1889	37,287	14,088	18,121	1689
1890	39,385	14,302	19,853	1260
1891	43,320	15,590	22,424	1719
1892	43,374	15,342	23,072	2237
1893	43,819	15,895	23,571	2146
1894	46,206	16,485	24,682	2402
1895	47,437	17,434	25,753	2244
1896	50,929	20,166	26,811	2271
1897	54,980	22,477	29,303	2271
1898	60,814	23,823	30,962	2364
1899	63,826	25,170	34,176	2373
1900	67,058	25,520	35,451	2371
1901	73,714	30,048	39,245	2382
1902	77,474	33,651	40,764	2433
1903	78,574	35,378	41,328	2433
1904	82,209	37,756	40,806	2488
1905	78,278	27,712	44,693	2977
1906	77,221	31,854	41,325	3174
1907	73,245	34,799	37,264	3237

* For a more detailed breakdown see Lambert, *Fisher's Naval Revolution*, appendix 3-6.

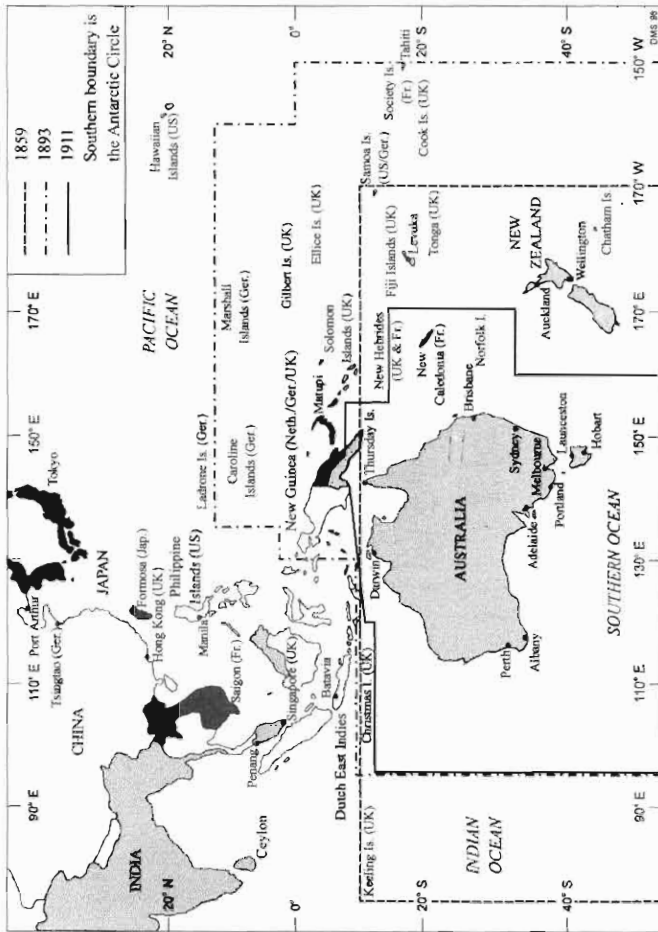
Appendix 4

Commodores and Commanders-in-Chief of the Australia Station, 1867–1913

August 1867	CDRE Rowley Lambert, CB
September 1870	CDRE Frederick Henry Stirling
May 1873	CDRE James Graham Goodenough, CB, CMG
September 1875	CDRE Anthony Hilary Hoskins, CB
December 1878	CDRE John Crawford Wilson
January 1882	CDRE James Elphinstone Erskine
January 1885	RADM George Tryon, CB
April 1887	RADM Henry Fairfax, CB
November 1889	RADM Lord Charles Scott, CB
November 1892	RADM Nathaniel Bowden Smith
January 1895	RADM Cyprian A.G. Bridge
January 1898	RADM Hugo L. Pearson
January 1901	RADM Sir Lewis Arthur Beaumont, KCMG
January 1903	VADM Sir Arthur D. Fanshawe, KCB
December 1905	VADM Sir Wilmot Hawkesworth Fawkes, KCB
February 1908	VADM Sir Richard Poore, KCB
May 1911–October 1913	VADM Sir George Fowler King-Hall, CV

Appendix 5

Changes to the Australia Station 1859–1911



Defence Publishing Service
DPS: 34479/98