

There could be only one other test of the justice of my contentions, and that is the test of war ; which the country (by better luck than it deserved) narrowly escaped in the summer of 1911.

It should not be supposed that the evil years of criminal economy which depleted the *personnel* of the Fleet can be remedied in a moment by joining thousands of men. Five years are required to train a really efficient seaman, and while he is being trained he is necessarily a weak element in a fighting Service. For this reason, the requirements of the Fleet should be estimated long beforehand, so that only a small proportion of new entries should be normally under training. (They were so estimated in 1904 ; and the estimate, as I have said, was secretly cancelled.)

The result, therefore, of prolonged neglect, followed by a sudden burst of recruiting, is to flood the Navy with untrained and half-trained men, thereby greatly enlarging the element of weakness. All depends on officers and men : the rest—as the poet has said—is ironmongery.

It is due to the action of the authorities during the period 1904 to 1909, that for years

to come the efficiency of the Fleet will be gravely impaired. During the whole of the period, 1904 to 1909, Parliament was continually and explicitly assured by officials that the numbers of the *personnel* were entirely sufficient. It was not true, and they knew it was not true. That advantage, in which consisted the peculiar superiority of the British Navy over all other Fleets, the long-service trained man, has been wantonly impaired.

If the deficiency is to be made up, the recruiting of the men required is only now beginning, and the short service system must be abolished. It is worse than useless to continue to build ships while trained men are withheld.

I will here refer to an ancient wrong done to the officers of the Royal Navy ; the system of half-pay. Naval officers dedicate their lives to their country's service. The country, in return, pays them as little as it can, and takes every opportunity to reduce that little by one half. I say that the half-pay system is a national disgrace.

The restoration of the *personnel* will be expensive. But whose fault is that ?

XIII

PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE



## XIII

### PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE

The Declaration of London. THE House of Lords, by their action in rejecting the Naval Prize Bill, have postponed, it is to be hoped for ever, the ratification of the iniquitous Declaration of London. But in case the issue should be revived, it is well that the public should understand to what the British Empire was being committed by the present administration.

The terms of the Declaration were the subject of vigorous protest throughout the country so soon as the public were made acquainted with their import. His Majesty's Ministers proved themselves totally unable to meet the objections urged against the ratification of the Declaration. The attitude of the Government was sufficiently defined by the Prime Minister on June 21, 1911, when, in reply to an observation made by

Mr. Rowland Hunt, reminding him that the Under - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, on July 21, 1910, stated that the Declaration of London would not be ratified unless passed by Parliament, Mr. Asquith said that "it will make no difference to the action of His Majesty's Government whether the House of Lords approve or disapprove";<sup>1</sup> and adding, in reply to a question put by Mr. Remnant, that "this Declaration has been approved by His Majesty's Government after the fullest examination and consideration. They regard it as a matter of high policy, and they are not going to abdicate their responsibility by leaving it an open question."

During the debate on the second reading of the Naval Prize Bill, in which the International Prize Court Convention has been incorporated, and which Bill, if enacted, would imply some sort of constructive acceptance of the Declaration of London, the late First Lord of the Admiralty took occasion publicly to insult the officers of the Royal Navy. It was subsequently elicited from Mr. McKenna, by Mr. Rowland Hunt, that the Declaration of

<sup>1</sup> What does Mr. Asquith say now?

London had never been submitted to the judgment of the Board of Admiralty. "It was," said Mr. McKenna, "approved by the First Sea Lord and myself."

A brief recapitulation of the history of the Declaration of London may serve to elucidate its origin. At the Peace Conference held at the Hague in 1907, the British delegates were instructed by the Government to urge upon the assembly a scheme for general disarmament. The suggestion was politely but firmly dismissed by the foreign delegates. But the British delegates were further instructed to agree to the German proposal for the institution of an International Prize Court of Appeal, in pursuance of that policy of arbitration dear to the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and other amiable visionaries. It cannot be too clearly understood that the object of that policy was the ultimate reduction of the Royal Navy. The intention was to substitute for effective force a series of paper safeguards and agreements drawn up by international lawyers. It was applauded by the foreign delegates; for, as a matter of fact, it presented them with the opportunity towards which their efforts had

been directed since the signature of the Treaty of Paris in 1856. By that instrument, Great Britain, of her own act, relinquished a powerful weapon in maritime warfare, and the most potent argument for keeping the peace known to history. It was ordained that the neutral flag should cover the enemy cargo, except contraband of war, thereby enfranchising the neutral ship. If, by means of the constitution of an International Prize Court, Great Britain could be induced to forfeit her remaining maritime rights, the labours of foreign maritime Powers, insidiously pursued for more than fifty years, would at length be crowned with success.

The thing was done. It was agreed that the International Prize Court of Appeal should be established, in violation of the common law of England, and in derogation of the authority of the King in Council. There were to be fifteen judges, of whom only one would be British. To this amorphous body British interests were to be absolutely confided.

It was then suddenly discovered that the new tribunal had no code of law upon which to base its decisions. Even the British Government were staggered by the prospect



of fourteen foreign judges and one Englishman administering a law that did not exist. So it was decided to make the law. To that end, a Naval Conference was summoned to assemble in London. At that Conference, the Declaration of London was drawn up, and was signed on February 26th, 1909. As might have been expected, the British delegates were out-manceuvred upon every essential point. The most important point of all, whether or not privateering in disguise was to be recognized, the foreign delegates refused to allow to be decided.

As matters stand, the right to convert merchant-ships into warships on the high seas, which is the right, abolished by the Declaration of Paris, to commission privateers, remains an open question, to be decided, according to a statement made by the late First Lord of the Admiralty, when the occasion arises.

But under the Declaration of London, the right to sink neutral vessels is for the first time legally recognized. That right, however, does not belong to British warships in cases in which the neutral vessel, laden with contraband of war consigned to the enemy, is proceeding

to a neutral port. In the United Kingdom, it is open to the enemy to declare all ports "bases of supply."

It is also open to any foreign naval Power secretly to organize an attack upon the British mercantile marine conducted by transformed merchantmen in every quarter of the globe. Under the Declaration of London, if this country were not at war, British merchantships would still be liable to destruction as neutrals.

In the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of June 13, 1911, there appear the following comments upon the effect of the Declaration of London :

"A temporary disturbance (even if only partial) in the working of the oversea transport of food supplies would bring about the severest disturbance and crisis in Great Britain and not only in the direction of raising the price of food commodities, but also a financial overthrow and total collapse."

As the German writer justly remarks, this country is faced with the danger not of invasion, but of starvation.

It is argued that the danger would be as great or as little if there were no Declaration

of London. The answer is that the very fact that privateering is not mentioned in the new code of law laid down by the Declaration affords, at least, ground for its justification, and that the sinking of neutrals and prizes, permitted by the Declaration would immensely aggravate the "moral effect" of the outbreak of war, thereby creating in all probability a panic.

But the argument has this much truth in it, that the withdrawal of cruisers from the trade routes in 1905 did then leave the arteries of the Empire open to attack, and open they remain. Before 1905, there were in round number sixty such vessels disposed upon the trade routes. To-day, there are twenty-three.

The Declaration of London also restricts the rights of blockade, as Sir Edward Fry himself admitted. The *Hamburger Nachrichten* of June 13 observes that "the formation of the North Sea is one naturally favouring a blockade of German sea traffic, and even for what the English call 'the high sea blockade,' by the closing up of the arm of the sea between Scotland and Norway. This is what they call 'sealing the North Sea.'

By the Declaration of London such a blockade may not be carried out, as by Article 1 it is provided that a blockade must not extend beyond the ports and coasts belonging to or occupied by the enemy; and Article 18 says that the blockading forces must not bar access to neutral ports or coasts."

The writer ingenuously adds that "in Germany we have received these decisions with exceptional pleasure."

Sir Edward Grey will no doubt be gratified by this unsolicited testimonial to the success of his diplomacy.

British citizens will rather reflect upon the facts that the Declaration of London, representing the result of a determined effort of the Government permanently to reduce the Royal Navy, handed over British maritime rights to a Foreign Court, failed to forbid privateering, permitted the sinking of untried neutrals, doubled the danger of starvation in case of war, and, what is even worse, crippled in every way the action of the British Fleet.

These rules and regulations, and others hardly less injurious to British interests, were drawn by Foreign Office clerks according to

the suggestions of alien jurists. But they are the officers of the Royal Navy who would be charged with their execution, and who alone, by education and experience, are qualified to judge of their effect. Their business is to fight to win. If, by means of rules drawn up by civilians, naval officers are forced to fight at a disadvantage, they are not to be blamed if they are defeated.

But the Declaration of London affords full opportunity for the enemy to strike a fatal blow before the Navy can use even those powers left to it.

The Second  
Peace  
Conference  
(Conven-  
tions) Bill.

Among other acts and deeds of the disastrous Peace Conference of 1907, are fourteen "conventions" signed by the British delegates. The Government propose to authorize the ratification of "various" unnamed conventions among the batch by the Second Peace Conference (Conventions) Bill. One of the conventions gives an International Tribunal the right, exercised through the Secretary of State and the Governors-General of British possessions overseas, to summon a witness from any corner of the globe. The said witness has no appeal. He

must produce any documents required of him. No provision is made for payment of his expenses. British subjects are here introduced to one of the privileges resulting from the transference of their legal rights to a foreign tribunal.

Other clauses of the Convention ordain that the master of any British ship, being neutral, and having on board the sick, wounded and shipwrecked men of a belligerent, shall give them up on demand of "any of the belligerent States," and that—incredible as it may seem—the captain of a British hospital ship, having sick and wounded on board when this country is at war, shall give them up at the order of an officer of an enemy warship.

That these despicable and wicked provisions should be sanctioned by any man calling himself British, I cannot believe.

Nor can I avoid the reflection that a country which allows itself to be enmeshed in this tangle of sentimental agreements, illegal treaties, and lawyers' traps in matters which concern the national honour and the national safety, deserves the irremediable catastrophe which will befall it.

The Medi-  
terranean  
and Pacific.

By the year 1915, the increase of the Austrian and Italian navies will involve the necessity of placing a squadron of at least eight modern heavy armoured ships in the Mediterranean, thereby reducing our force in Home Waters to an approximate equality with the force of Germany. It may become necessary, in addition, to keep a battle squadron on the China station. At no very distant date, the Panama Canal will be opened: an event which will have the effect of shifting the strategic balance of the world.

These are the most elementary considerations, with which every student of affairs is acquainted. I have yet to learn that the Government have even considered the measures required to meet the needs of a serious situation. It is indeed perfectly obvious that the time of Ministers is fully occupied in dealing with the domestic and purely partisan issues of the moment, to the neglect of that security upon which all social reform depends.

The  
Dominions'  
Navies.

The contributions of the Dominions towards the naval defence of the Empire are based upon the principle of local autonomy. New Zealand alone has

declared herself in favour of one Imperial Navy. Australia and Canada control their own navies, and reserve the right to decide whether or no in case of war their fleets shall aid the Imperial Government. It follows that, with regard to the naval forces of the Empire, there is dual control; a system which is impracticable in peace and disastrous in war.

The plain fact is that, when in 1909 the representatives of the Dominions were called together in conference to discuss the question of their contribution to the naval defence of the Empire, every difficulty was deliberately ignored by the Imperial Government, and the Dominions were led to believe that, if they built ships, all would be well.

The discussion of supreme control, of common discipline, of training, of rates of pay, all questions essential to the apprehension of the problem, was postponed.

According to the scheme of defence agreed upon at the Imperial Conference of 1911,<sup>1</sup> which was presented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to the Canadian House of Commons before it

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix XI.



was laid before Parliament in this country, the Admiralty are to be responsible for the ships of the Dominions' Navies when those vessels go beyond the areas allotted to them. Such an arrangement cannot be successfully carried into operation. Training and discipline are to be uniform. In default of a single supreme control, such uniformity will be impracticable. The ships of the Dominions' Navies are to "hoist at the stern the white ensign as the symbol of the authority of the Crown, and at the jackstaff the distinctive flag of the Dominion." But the "authority of the Crown" is only to be exercised by consent of the Dominion Governments; therefore, except in cases when the Admiralty have been asked to assume responsibility for the Dominion Ships, those vessels will not be recognized as warships by foreign Powers.

I do not point out these grave difficulties in order to reflect upon the patriotism and the enterprise of the Dominions; but for the purpose of enabling British subjects to recognize the facts of the case, so sedulously disguised by the authorities. Difficulties may be overcome; but they can never be solved so

long as the authorities pretend they do not exist.

As matters stand, it must be said—however disagreeable the task—that the Dominions' Navies cannot be reckoned among the effective naval forces of the Empire.

XIV

A SURVEY OF THE SITUATION



## XIV

### A SURVEY OF THE SITUATION

THE facts above stated cannot with truth be denied. What is the conclusion to be drawn from them? I venture to affirm that there is only one conclusion possible. It is that the naval policy of the years 1902 to 1909 was mistaken in every important particular. From the beginning, the great body of naval opinion held that the new policy was wrong, that it endangered the security of the country and of the Empire, and that the expense of repairing the disastrous effects of a series of rash, violent, and unnecessary experiments would be immense.

Several officers, upon whom fell the disagreeable but inevitable necessity of expressing to the authorities, in response to official request, views adverse to the policy of the Admiralty, have been placed on half-pay and kept without employment, or their

Service careers have been summarily terminated. Among them, three officers would have been ruined by the authorities for daring to tell the truth when, at the request of the authorities themselves, they gave evidence with regard to certain matters, had it not been that public opinion intervened in time to save them from being hunted out of the Service.

These officers were right ; the Navy was right ; and the authorities were wrong.

Since the end of the period of maladministration, whose chief mistakes I have recorded, an honest attempt has been made to remedy them. But the evils have gone too deep to be cured by palliatives and half measures. The first step towards restoration is to understand the extent of the mischief to be repaired.

First in importance there falls to be considered the education and training of officers, upon whom the whole efficiency of the Fleet depends. The scheme of 1902, altered in 1904, is proving utterly impracticable. If the Fleet is not to be left gravely deficient in Marine and Engineer officers, measures must at once be taken to remedy the fatal defects of the existing system. The postponement by

the Admiralty of the specialization of officers for another two years (dating from May, 1911) will only serve to aggravate the evil.

The force of ships required is the next consideration. I have of my own personal knowledge, acquired in commanding fleets in various quarters of the globe, affirmed that the Fleet is gravely deficient in small cruisers and destroyers. It is so deficient as to impair the ability of action of the battle squadrons of heavy ships.

The essential requirements of a battle squadron in time of war may be briefly indicated. The proportion of cruisers should be five cruisers to every two battleships or large armoured cruisers. The small cruiser force must be disposed so that they form a protecting screen distant 120 or 140 miles on all sides from the battle squadron. By no other means is it possible to move a battle squadron at night without risking its destruction by the attack of torpedo craft. No anti-torpedo armament can effectually protect a fleet of battleships attacked at night by squadrons of torpedo craft.

Nor can the fleet act effectually so long

as the grave deficiencies in coal reserve, in stores, in docks, are not made up. The lack of proper provision of these items is common knowledge throughout the Navy.

Next in importance is the deficiency in the *personnel*. That deficiency will continue, in spite of the belated efforts of the authorities hastily to remedy it, until there exists a War Staff which shall be competent to decide for what purposes the men are required, how many are required, and how they should be distributed.

The present condition of the Trade Routes is a national danger. In 1903, there were sixty small cruisers placed on foreign stations. To-day, there are twenty-three. In the interval an event has occurred of the gravest moment to the country.

Privateering, abolished by the Declaration of Paris of 1856, has in effect been insidiously revived by the Peace Conference of 1907.

In 1903, the only danger to the Trade Routes to be apprehended was the attack upon commerce by naval warships. It was under these conditions considered necessary to keep a large force of cruisers on foreign



stations. To-day, when the danger may be multiplied tenfold by the undefined license accorded to merchantmen, the number of cruisers on foreign stations has been diminished by about two-thirds, nor is there any force in the Home ports ready to reinforce them. The cruisers allocated for that duty are reserve ships which, as their complements consist of Royal Naval Reserve men, could not be manned until after the outbreak of war, when it would be too late. These vessels are also unsuitable for this particular service.

The result is that our sea-borne trade upon whose punctual arrival in this country the life of its people depends, is left open to sudden and secretly organized attack on the high seas, conducted by merchant vessels which, a few hours previously, were receiving the shelter of neutral harbours as non-combatants, and which a few hours later may repair to the same harbours to take in supplies before embarking upon new adventures.

When the late First Lord was asked in the House of Commons whether, in view of the official statement that the Government did not admit the right of foreign nations to

convert merchant ships into men-of-war on the high seas, he would state what action the Government would take if foreign merchant ships were so converted, Mr. McKenna said that "the action to be taken will be a matter for the decision of the Government when the occasion arises."

We are then to understand that no measures are to be taken until it is too late. In the days of privateering, merchant ships were armed, and this country was then self-supporting. Now that privateering has been revived, and the country is almost entirely dependent upon food supplied from overseas, the mercantile marine is left to take its chance.

There is only one method of securing the safety of the roads of the sea: to station cruisers there on patrol duty. We have, however, thrown away the ships formerly used for that purpose, and a new force is only now beginning slowly to be created. It is also to be remembered that the small cruisers recently built, or now in course of construction, are required to work with the Fleet.

The coaling and repairing stations overseas,

which served as naval bases for ships of war on passage and for the cruiser patrols, have been dismantled and their stores have been sold.

These things were done in accordance with the recommendations of the Owen Commission, against which protests were made by the local authorities in every quarter of the globe, especially with regard to the damage inflicted at Malta, Gibraltar, and upon the China and East Indies Stations. In reply to these protests, it was stated that the Admiralty would in future undertake the defence of naval bases.

The mine-fields were all abolished, and the guns were dismantled or removed. The mine-fields at home and at one or two places abroad were shortly afterwards replaced at a cost of thousands of pounds.

At Rangoon, to which place the oil, an invaluable prize, is conducted in pipes, the mines were removed. Trincomalee, the most important naval base in Eastern waters, is left without a soldier or a gun.

Our own scheme of defence against floating mines sown in home waters has broken down, owing to the failure of the Admiralty to make

suitable arrangements with the deep-sea fishermen required to man the trawlers allocated for mine-sweeping duties.

It is to be remembered that in the Russo-Japanese war, eleven Japanese ships of which two were battleships, and six Russian ships of which one was a battleship, were sunk, while three Japanese and four Russian vessels, were badly damaged by mines.

The Russo-Japanese war from beginning to end afforded a supreme demonstration of the essential value of organization for war and of the penalty which inevitably attaches to its neglect.

In our own Service, individual officers, particular crews, and single ships, have never been more efficient. But the Fleet, as a whole, taking into consideration its vastly increased responsibilities with regard to the protection of wealth in transportation, and the rise to power of foreign navies, has seldom been less adequate. — When the people behold the Fleet arrayed in review order, they receive an impression of overwhelming strength. But what they cannot see are the forces which the Fleet has to encounter, and the tasks which it has to fulfil.

At the Coronation Review were 32 battle-ships, 25 armoured cruisers — 57 heavy armoured ships in all—*and only nine protected cruisers.* But the heavy armoured ships depend for their utility upon their complementary units. Deprived as they are of these, they are a present to the enemy.

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter: We have not possessed a proper organization for war; the collective responsibility of the Board of Admiralty has been in practice abolished; and until we have a War Staff rightly constituted to organize the Fleet for war, our excellent officers, our skilled crews, and our fine ships are liable to be sacrificed in the most bitter of all sacrifices, that by which nothing is gained; while—what is of less moment—our money may all be spent in vain.



# APPENDIX

## I

EXTRACT FROM ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM  
16TH DECEMBER, 1902 (PARLIAMENTARY  
PAPER CD. 1385).

. . . . The cardinal feature of the scheme is the homogeneous training of Executive, Engineer, and Marine Officers. The policy of the Board is to create a body of young officers who at the moment of mobilization for war will be equally available for all the general duties of the Fleet, and to consolidate into one harmonious whole the fighting officers of the Navy. . . .

## II

EXTRACT FROM ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM  
OF 16TH DECEMBER, 1902, PAGE 3,  
(PARLIAMENTARY PAPER CD. 1385).

### *New Scheme.*

It has been decided that henceforth—

1. All officers for the Executive and Engineer branches of the Navy and for the

Royal Marines shall enter the Service as Naval Cadets under exactly the same conditions between the ages of twelve and thirteen.

2. That these Cadets shall all be trained on exactly the same system until they shall have passed for the rank of Sub-Lieutenant between the ages of nineteen and twenty.

3. That at about the age of twenty these Sub-Lieutenants shall be distributed between the three branches of the service which are essential to the fighting efficiency of the Fleet—the Executive, the Engineer, and the Marine.

The result aimed at is, to a certain point community of knowledge and lifelong community of sentiment. The only machinery which can produce this result is early companionship and community of instruction. These opportunities will be secured by a policy of—

One System of Supply.

One System of Entry.

One System of Training.

### III

EXTRACT FROM ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM  
“NAVY, A STATEMENT OF ADMIRALTY  
POLICY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 1905” (PAR-  
LIAMENTARY PAPER CD. 2791).

. . . This question has received earnest



consideration, and, so far as concerns those entered under the New System it has been decided that all Executive, Engineering, and Marine duties will be performed by Executive officers of common entry and training, who will specialize for the different duties without separating into permanent and distinct branches. The consequence of this development of the original proposals is that there will be in future only one class of officer in all departments, and whether performing Engine-room, Marine, Gunnery, Torpedo, or Navigation duties, all will be equal and all will be Executive Officers. . . .

#### IV

EXTRACT FROM ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM  
“NAVY, A STATEMENT OF ADMIRALTY  
POLICY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 1905” (PARLIAM-  
ENTARY PAPER CD. 2791).

Since the first two years of the training of Cadets under the new system has now been completed, an estimate can be formed of what the attainments of these officers will be at the end of their sea training as Midshipmen. The success with which this critical stage of the tuition has been passed justifies the opinion that the progress of the Cadets during their remaining courses at Dartmouth College in the training Cruisers, and throughout the

three years sea service as Midshipmen, will proceed on normal lines, and it now appears certain that the full advantages which were expected to be derived from the early and thorough grounding in Scientific, Engineering, and general Professional Subjects will be obtained. It is also possible to forecast the general state of professional knowledge of the new officers when they arrive at the rank of Sub-Lieutenants, and definite conclusions can be formed as to the amount of special education which will afterwards be necessary to fit them for undertaking the special duties of the various branches of the Service, and also as to the general lines which these specialist courses must follow. . . .

## V

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 20TH JULY, 1911.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, under the Cawdor Memorandum of 1905 (Cd. 2791), officers were to be specialized; whether the midshipmen who should have obtained the rank of Sub-Lieutenant in May, 1911, have been put back for two years; and, if so, whether he will state the reason why the Admiralty took this step?

MR. MCKENNA.—It is not understood what exact meaning is conveyed by the use of the

expression "have been put back for two years." Under the Cawdor Memorandum no officer would have been withdrawn from sea to specialize until at least two years from the date of becoming Sub-Lieutenant, one year of which must have been served at sea. Under the existing arrangements (announced in circular letter of 1st May, 1908), officers must serve for two years from the date of becoming Sub-Lieutenant, either as Sub-Lieutenant or Lieutenant. In every case at least one year must have been as Lieutenant at sea before becoming eligible to specialize.

## VI

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 6TH APRIL, 1909.

MR. CARR-GOMM asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention had been called to some extracts from a letter alleged to have been written three years ago by a captain of six years' seniority to Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Fisher; whether he is aware that a charge has been publicly made that this letter revealed a system of espionage, and that the captain who wrote it criticized his superior officers wholesale; and whether he proposes to take any steps in the matter?

MR. MCKENNA.—The letter in question was written by Captain R. H. Bacon, now

Director of Naval Ordnance, an officer who has the full confidence of the Board of Admiralty. I have read the letter; it is a perfectly proper letter to have been written by Captain Bacon, and I cannot find in it the smallest ground for any of the calumnious charges which have been based upon it. It contains no opinion of Captain Bacon concerning his commanding officers or criticism of any officers in the Fleet.

## VII

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY 30, 1908.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any communication had been received at the Admiralty from the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet with reference to a serious collision having been imminent between the "Good Hope" and the "Argyll," owing to an order given by the Commander-in-Chief.

MR. MCKENNA: The Board have had reported to them, and have examined the positions of the Fleet at the moment that the order of the Commander-in-Chief was signalled, and they were satisfied that the manœuvre was not dangerous. At the same time, the Rear-Admiral, as he thought that there was risk in carrying out the order, was

justified in turning the other way, and the Commander-in-Chief so informed him by signal at the time.

MR. BELLAIRS : Will the right hon. gentleman convey that answer to the editors of those papers which erroneously accused Lord Charles Beresford of having endangered the lives of 1,600 men ?

MR. MCKENNA : I think it is always desirable to avoid communication with the Press.

SIR G. PARKER : Is the right hon. gentleman now speaking for the whole of his colleagues ?

MR. MCKENNA : I do not think that I should be called upon to answer that question.

EARL WINTERTON asked what steps it was proposed to take to ascertain the name of the officer, who, in defiance of the King's Regulations, recently communicated to a newspaper an account of an alleged incident in the Channel Fleet ; and would the officer, if his name was disclosed, be tried by court-martial ?

MR. MCKENNA : I am not aware what grounds the noble lord has for imputing a breach of honour to any naval officer. If he will state them, or communicate them to me privately, I will investigate them. *They are quite unknown to me.*

EARL WINTERTON : I made no allegation

of breach of honour, but rather of breach of regulations. I shall raise the matter on the Appropriation Bill.

MR. MCKENNA : In my judgment, the suggestion in the question is such as to constitute a breach of honour.

EARL WINTERTON : That surely is a matter of opinion. My question was as to a matter of fact.

MR. BELLAIRS : Does the right hon. gentleman propose to enquire how this information leaked out ?

THE SPEAKER : The hon. member must give notice of that.

At midnight, while the discussion on the motion for the second reading was in progress,

EARL WINTERTON drew attention to the serious leakage of information in connection with the Navy, especially with reference to the communication which recently appeared in the "Times" to the effect that Lord Charles Beresford had jeopardized the safety of two of His Majesty's ships. Drastic steps, he said, should be taken to prevent such false statements being circulated, and to ascertain who was responsible for circulating them.

MR. MCKENNA said that *he had no knowledge who sent the message, and it was impossible for him to find out.* He assumed that the original communication was sent by some person in the Fleet to somebody on shore.

MR. CLAUDE HAY : Not by wireless telegraphy ?

MR. MCKENNA : If it had been so sent the Admiralty would have known of it. The suggestion is ludicrous. Continuing, the right hon. gentleman remarked that all the comments were made, not by the original communicator, but by the Press. It would be most unfair to suggest that any officer or person in the Service was in the least degree responsible for those comments. The gravamen of the charge did not lie in the fact of the signal, but in the comments on the signal. After the explanation he had given at question time he trusted that the whole incident, which had been a most unhappy one, would be allowed to drop.

### VIII

EXTRACT FROM SIR EDWARD GREY'S SPEECH  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 29TH MARCH,  
1909.

“ . . . With regard to the capacity for building hulls and propelling machinery, our capacity is considerably in excess of the German capacity ; and in the manufacture of guns of the largest size we believe that our capacity for output is also superior. *The doubtful point of the situation is our comparative capacity for the construction of gun mountings . . .* ”

## IX

NOTES SUPPLIED BY THE ADMIRALTY FOR THE USE OF THE WAR OFFICE IN THE DEBATE THAT WAS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN NOVEMBER, 1910, IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON A MOTION BY LORD ROBERTS.

The really serious danger that this country has to guard against in war is not invasion, but interruption of our trade and destruction of our Merchant Shipping.

The main object aimed at by our Fleet, whether for the defence of commerce or for any other purpose, is to prevent any ship of the enemy from getting to sea far enough to do any mischief before she is brought to action. Any disposition that is even moderately successful in attaining this object will almost certainly be effective in preventing a large fleet of transports, than which nothing is more vulnerable or more difficult to hide, from reaching our shores.

To realise the difficulty that an enemy would have in bringing such a fleet of transports to our coast and disembarking an army, it is necessary to remember that all the ships operating in home waters, whether they are in the North Sea, the Channel, or elsewhere, are in wireless communication with the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief, so that if a fleet of transports is sighted anywhere



by a single cruiser, or even by a merchant ship if she is fitted with wireless, every ship which happened to be in a position to intercept the transports would at once get the order to concentrate as necessary for the purpose, whether she was at sea or in harbour.

It is further necessary to remember that, even supposing that by some extraordinary lucky chance the transports were able to reach our coast without being detected, their presence must be known when they arrive there; and long before half the troops could be landed, the transports would be attacked and sunk by submarines which are stationed along the coast for that purpose.

Besides the submarines there would be always a large force of destroyers, either in the ports along the coast or within wireless call, as, in addition to those that may be definitely detailed for coast defence, the system of reliefs for those acting over sea will ensure a large number being actually in harbour at their respective bases, or within call while going to or returning from their stations.

These destroyers, though not specially stationed with that object, will always form, in conjunction with submarines, a very effective second line of defence in the improbable event of such a second line being required.

To understand thoroughly the small chance of an invasion from the other side of the

North Sea being successful, it is necessary to put oneself in the place of the officer who has to undertake the responsibility of conducting it.

His first difficulty will be to consider how he is to get his great fleet of transports to sea without any information of it leaking out through neutral nations or otherwise.

Next, he will consider that somewhere within wireless call we have nearly double the number of battleships and cruisers that he can muster, besides a swarm of destroyers.

He has probably very vague and unreliable information as to their positions which are constantly changing.

His unwieldy fleet will cover many square miles of water, and as all the ships will be obliged to carry lights for mutual safety, they will be visible nearly as far by night as by day. How can he hope to escape discovery?

Many of his transports will have speeds of not more than ten to twelve knots, so that there will be no hope for escape by flight if he is met by a superior force.

If he is sighted by any of our destroyers at night they will have little difficulty in avoiding the men-of-war and torpedoing the transports.

Is it possible to entice part of our fleet away by any stratagem? Possibly. But even if he succeeds in drawing off half our fleet, the other half, in conjunction with destroyers and submarines, would be quite sufficient to sink

the greater part of his transports, even if supported by the strongest fleet he could collect. The fleets would engage each other while the destroyers and submarines torpedoed the transports.

Finally, even if he reached the coast in safety, he would see that it was quite impossible to guard his transports against the attacks of submarines while he was landing the troops; and that it was quite certain that a superior force would be brought to attack him before the landing could be completed.

Taking all these facts into consideration, he would probably decide as the Admiralty have done, that an invasion on even the moderate scale of 70,000 men is practically impossible.

## X

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1911.

MR. GRETTON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if the Memorandum attached to the book named "Compulsory Service" and signed "A.K.W." was submitted and approved by the Board of Admiralty before its appearance in an unofficial publication emanating from another Department of the Government?

MR. MCKENNA: There was no Board meeting on the Memorandum referred to, but it was published with my approval.

MR. GRETTON: If there was no Board

meeting was the Memorandum submitted to the members separately?

MR. MCKENNA: The First Sea Lord is the special member of the Board who deals with subjects of that kind.

EARL WINTERTON: Are we to understand that it was not submitted to the Board as a whole?

MR. MCKENNA: The noble lord must not understand from what I have stated anything beyond what I have stated.

EARL WINTERTON: Then will the right hon. gentleman answer the original question?

MR. MCKENNA: I have answered it, and I will repeat my answer for the noble lord's benefit: "There was no Board meeting on the Memorandum referred to, but it was published with my approval."

LORD HUGH CECIL asked a question which was inaudible to the official reporter.

MR. MCKENNA: The noble lord is probably unaware of the constitution of the Board of Admiralty. If any member of the Board submits to me a document, and I approve it, that document has the approval of the Board of Admiralty.

## XI

## MEMORANDUM AGREED UPON BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE OVERSEA DOMINIONS AT THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF 1911.

The Memorandum is as follows:—

I.—The naval Services and forces of the Dominions of Canada and Australia will be exclusively under the control of their respective Governments.

II.—The training and discipline of the naval forces of the Dominions will be generally uniform with the training and discipline of the Fleet of the United Kingdom, and by arrangement the officers and men of the said forces will be interchangeable with those under the control of the British Admiralty.

III.—The ships of each Dominion naval force will hoist at the stern the white ensign as the symbol of the authority of the Crown, and at the Jack staff the distinctive flag of the Dominion.

IV.—The Canadian and Australian Governments will have their own naval stations as agreed upon from time to time. The limits of the stations are as described in Schedule A (Canada) and Schedule B (Australia).

V.—In the event of the Canadian or Australian Government desiring to send ships to a part of the British Empire outside their own

respective stations they will notify the British Admiralty.

VI.—In the event of the Canadian or Australian Government desiring to send ships to a foreign port they will obtain the concurrence of the Imperial Government in order that the necessary arrangements with the Foreign Office may be made, as in the case of ships of the British Fleet, in such time and manner as are usual between the British Admiralty and the Foreign Office.

VII.—While the ships of the Dominions are at a foreign port a report of their proceedings will be forwarded by the officer in command to the Commander-in-Chief of the station, or to the British Admiralty. An officer in command of a Dominion ship, so long as he remains in a foreign port, will obey any instructions he may receive from the Government of the United Kingdom as to the conduct of any international matter that may arise, the Dominion Government being informed. A commanding officer of a Dominion ship having to put into a foreign port without previous arrangement on account of stress of weather, damage, or any unforeseen emergency, will report his arrival and reason for calling to the Commander-in-Chief of the station or to the Admiralty, and will obey, so long as he remains in the foreign port, any instructions he may receive from the Government of the United Kingdom as to his relations with the

authorities, the Dominion Government being informed.

VIII.—The commanding officer of a Dominion ship having to put into a foreign port without previous arrangement on account of stress of weather, damage, or any unforeseen emergency will report his arrival and reason for calling to the Commander-in-Chief of the station or to the Admiralty, and will obey, so long as he remains in the foreign port, any instructions he may receive from the Government of the United Kingdom as to his relations with the authorities, the Dominion Government being informed.

IX.—When a ship of the British Admiralty meets a ship of the Dominion the senior officer will have the right of command in matters of ceremony, of international intercourse, or where united action is agreed upon, but will have no power to direct the movement of ships of the other Service unless the ships are ordered to co-operate by mutual agreement.

X.—In foreign ports the senior officer will take command, but not so as to interfere with orders that the junior officer may have received from his own Government.

XI.—When a court-martial has to be ordered by a Dominion and a sufficient number of officers are not available in the Dominion Service at the time, the British Admiralty, if requested, will make the necessary arrangements to enable a court to

be formed. Provision will be made by Order of His Majesty in Council and the Dominion Governments to define the conditions under which the officers of the different services are to sit on joint courts-martial.

XII.—The British Admiralty undertakes to lend to the Dominions during the period of development of their services, under conditions to be agreed upon, such flag officers and other officers and men as may be needed. In their selection preference shall be given to officers and men coming from or connected with the Dominion, but they should all be volunteers to the Service.

XIII.—The service of officers of the British Fleet in the Dominion naval forces, or of officers of these forces in the British Fleet, will count in all respects for promotion, pay, retirement, &c., as service in their respective forces.

XIV.—In order to determine all questions of seniority that may arise, the names of all officers will be shown in the Navy List and their seniority determined by the date of their commission, whichever is the earlier in the British, Canadian, or Australian Services.

XV.—It is desirable in the interest of efficiency and co-operation that arrangements should be made from time to time between the British Admiralty and the Dominions for ships of the Dominions to take part in fleet exercises, or for any other joint training



considered necessary, under the senior naval officer. While so employed the ships will be under the command of that officer, who would not, however, interfere in the internal economy of the ships of another Service further than may be absolutely necessary.

XVI.—In time of war, when the Naval Service of a Dominion or any part thereof has been put at the disposal of the Imperial Government by the Dominion authorities, the ships will form an integral part of the British Fleet and will remain under the control of the British Admiralty during the continuance of the war.

XVII.—The Dominions having applied to their naval forces the King's Regulations, Admiralty Instructions, and the Naval Discipline Act, the British Admiralty and the Dominion Governments will communicate to each other any changes which they propose to make in these Regulations or that Act.

## THE SCHEDULES.

### *Schedule A (Canada).*

The Canadian Atlantic Station will include the waters north of 30 deg. North latitude, and west of meridian 40 deg. West longitude.

The Canadian Pacific Station will include the waters north of 30 deg. North latitude, and east of meridian 180 deg. longitude.

*Schedule B (Australia).*

The Australian Naval Station will include on the north from 95 deg. East longitude by parallel 13 deg. South latitude to 120 deg. East longitude, thence north to 11 deg. South latitude, thence to the boundary with Dutch New Guinea on the south coast in about longitude 141 deg. East, thence along the coast of British New Guinea to the boundary with German New Guinea in latitude 8 deg. South, thence east to 155 deg. East longitude.

On the east by the meridian of 155 deg. East longitude to 15 deg. South latitude, thence to 28 deg. South latitude on the meridian of 170 deg. longitude, thence south to 32 deg. South latitude, thence west of the meridian of 160 deg. East longitude, thence south.

On the south by the Antarctic Circle.

On the west by the meridian of 95 deg. East longitude.

## XII

THE UNREADINESS OF THE FLEET IN THE  
CRISIS OF 1911.

IN an article entitled "The Admiralty and the Autumn Crisis," appearing in "The United Service Magazine" for January, 1912, written by Lieutenant Alfred Dewar, Royal Navy, the following statements occur, and have not been contradicted:—

“Coal certainly had to be hurried northwards by rail, and the fact that the ships of the First Division were carrying out their ordinary routine of battle practice (*vide The Referee*, of the 10th December), leads me to infer that they were ill-informed of the nature of the crisis.

“Nor were there any mine clearers available either at Cromarty or in the Forth. . . .

“Now the watching of a crisis, the preparation of auxiliary vessels, the supervision and checking of supplies of coal and ammunition, and finally the issue of information and instruction to the fleets at sea are part of the essential functions of an Admiralty Staff, and from the fact that none of these duties seem to have been performed, we may infer that the ‘W.C.-M.D.-N.I.D.’ system is more complicated and much less efficient than a trained staff. And if this system jammed on the mere rumour of war, one is justified in believing that it would result in a disastrous breakdown somewhere or other during the actual progress of operations.”

The system to which the writer refers is the system of War Council ; Mobilisation Department ; Naval Intelligence Department ; and “M.” Department—M. standing for Military, and the department being appropriately officered by civilians. In other words, there is no co-ordination, or collective responsibility, at the Admiralty. Those who understand the

system have always affirmed that, in the event of war, it would utterly break down. That is precisely what occurred last year.

“The members of these departments,” continues Lieutenant Dewar, “are not trained on any definite system, and so they are all of them in a subordinate and subservient position.”

It would be more accurate to say that the professional element is made “subordinate and subservient” to the “M.,” or civilian branch, whose duties ought to be, but are not, limited to supply as distinguished from military (or executive) duties. So long as this condition of affairs is permitted to continue, there can be no efficient organisation for war.

“The W.C.-M.D.-N.I.D. system was founded largely as a species of outwork or entrenchment to prevent any attempt to introduce a real staff,” is Lieutenant Dewar’s pithy comment; and he pertinently observes that “we are constantly informed that the Admiralty ‘policy’ is to remain unchanged. If this is really the case, then all this talk of a staff is futile.”

On December 6, 1911, Mr. Ashley asked the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Churchill) a series of questions relating to the actual state of the Fleet on November 23, 1911. The First Lord declined to answer them.

According to “The Naval and Military Record” of December 27, 1911, the state of

the Fleet on November 23, 1911, was that out of 22 battleships no more than 13 were available, and out of 14 armoured cruisers only 3 were available, not including the *Inflexible*, whose refit was completing.

The article concludes as follows:—

“ Of the First and Second Battle squadrons of the Home fleet two ships (from each) were in dockyard hands, and of the Atlantic fleet five ships were at, or in the neighbourhood of, Gibraltar (including one in dock), while the *Venerable* was home for recommissioning. Actually available in home waters there were, therefore, twelve battleships from the Home fleet and one from the Atlantic fleet. The Cruiser squadrons were in no better position. From the First and the Second, two ships each were in Dockyard hands, while one from the First and two from the Second were escorting the *Medina*. Three of the Fifth Cruiser squadron were with the Battle fleet at Gibraltar, while the fourth was with the *Medina*. That is, of 22 battleships 13 were available, and of 14 armoured cruisers, three. This does not, however, include the *Inflexible*, whose refit at Chatham was then practically complete.

“ Here, then, are the plain facts. In 1905, when Germany had seventeen armoured ships in full commission, the Admiralty laid down regulations whose effect was that there were always to be at least 31 armoured ships at, or instantly ready for, sea, this allowing for the absence of

six vessels in Dockyard hands or at their home ports for leave. On November 23rd last Germany had 20 armoured ships in full commission, though the number actually available we do not know; and the number of British ships at or instantly ready for sea in home waters was 16, or 17 if we include the *Inflexible*.

“It is clear, of course, that the regulations of 1905 have been withdrawn, and the First Lord has suggested that a question be put down asking for details of that which has been substituted. We shall have to wait a couple of months for the answer, but it will be interesting to see whether it allows for the simultaneous withdrawal of twenty armoured ships from a nominal force of thirty-six.”

### XIII

SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE MEMORANDUM DRAWN UP BY CAPTAIN LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (JUNIOR LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY) IN 1886, CALLING ATTENTION TO THE NECESSITY OF CREATING A NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT AT THE ADMIRALTY.

#### *War Organisation.*

“*Introduction and General Remarks.* The perilous absence of any plan or preparation for war, and the gravity and imminence of the

danger which may result to this country from such a state of affairs, has induced me to write this paper for the prompt consideration of the present Board of Admiralty.

“I propose, first, to point out definitely the dangers that exist, and then to submit proposals for a scheme of organisation, in order that the question may be dealt with *immediately*.

“The scare of 1885<sup>1</sup> showed, approximately, what we should actually require in officers, men, merchant shipping, armament, ammunition, coal, medical and commissariat stores, in a war with a second-rate maritime power, over and above what is now at our disposal.

*“It is quite incredible that, with the knowledge we possess as to what will actually be required at the moment of a declaration of war, no steps have been taken to organise or prepare any method or plan for showing how or where these absolutely necessary requirements are to be obtained.*

“*Foreign Headquarters' Plans.*—We know that France, Germany, Russia, Austria, and Italy have a regular headquarters' staff at their Admiralties, whose duties consist solely in organising plans of the most elaborate description for war preparations. These plans are kept to hand in the office, and corrected in

<sup>1</sup> The scare of 1909 showed much the same. The crisis of the summer of 1911 showed a total lack of organisation for war.

detail every three months, so that in the event of war being declared the fleet can be mobilised, reserve ships filled with men, ammunition, coals and provisions, and the Commanders of Squadrons given immediate and decisive instructions as to the line of attack they are to pursue. In fact, so complete is the organisation in the offices of these countries that the War Minister may ring his bell, order a telegram to be sent to the Admirals and Heads of Departments, 'War with England' (Russia, or any other country, as the case may be), and then, like Moltke, he can lie on his sofa and continue the latest novel with the knowledge that every officer and man of the *personnel* will be in his place, and every article of material exactly where it is wanted.

"In England, no similar plan or system exists, although it is far more necessary to this country in consequence of the larger extent and scattered position of her possessions, which from their weak and isolated condition, would invite, and be certain of receiving, an enemy's attack.

*"If you read between the lines of the Report on the Mobilisation of Ships in Reserve, dated the 31st January, in 1885, in anticipation of an outbreak of war in the spring of that year, it will be seen that this Report—by stating in black and white the personnel and material considered necessary in case of war—is an absolutely conclusive proof of the imperative necessity for*



*immediate organisation in the direction I shall endeavour to point out, and clearly exhibits what a dangerous state of affairs exists through our utter ignorance as to how or where we should get what we know is required in the event of war being declared.*

“*Proclamation of War.*—In these days of electricity and speed, the first point scored may not only save the country which gains this advantage millions, but may have the effect of ultimately winning the campaign. This is peculiarly applicable to our foreign stations. Through neglect of organisation and systematic instruction, as well as from the *total want of ordinary foresight*, the Admiralty render it not only possible, but probable, that an active and enterprising enemy like Russia or France would most certainly score the first advantage because a delay of two days must elapse, owing to the antiquated formalities of the present system, before the Admiralty could communicate the proclamation of war to the commanders-in-chief on different stations, there being at this moment no precise wording for the proclamation declaring war.<sup>1</sup>

“Under present conditions, the enemy would undoubtedly receive the official news of intended hostilities first, which would be an enormous advantage.

<sup>1</sup> Has any change been made in this respect? The events of 1911 would indicate that no change has been made.

“ It should be immediately arranged that the British commanders-in-chief on foreign stations shall be in a position to receive news of a Declaration of War, if not before, certainly as soon as the enemy. The delay which must occur under the present system may be fatal on such stations as China or Australia, where there is floating wealth to the value of millions, as the enemy, during the interval referred to, would certainly cut the telegraph cables, and the first intimation of war to the English Fleet would be the sinking of the valuable British merchant vessels, or even of English men-of-war. . . .

“ Having, to the best of my ability, pointed out the *indispensable necessity for immediately recognising the gravity of the present state of affairs*, I will now submit a proposal for placing matters in that state of efficiency which every one must acknowledge to be positively essential. I am not egotistical enough to imagine I have made some novel discovery, as I know perfectly well from conversations I have had that every seaman who has sat on the Board of Admiralty of late years has felt and recognised the importance of the subjects embodied in this paper. The question naturally arises, ‘ Why, then, has not this subject been prominently brought forward before ? ’ The answer to this is simple (as I have already remarked), ‘ *It has been nobody’s place to do so.* ’ This is proved by studying the table of ‘ *Distribution of Business* ’ among the

*members of the Board, in which table there is not a single reference to 'preparation for war' and 'mobilisation of the Fleet,' subjects which in the French and German Admiralties are considered among the first and most important items of business.*

“It would be impossible, owing to the large amount of work for which the Sea Lords are at present responsible, to add to their duties anything of so extensive a character as would be involved in carrying out any such proposals as these. This is notably the case with the First Naval Lord, who, in my humble opinion, has always had too much to do, but as the work has been done by so many seamen before, the loyalty of a naval officer prevents his complaining of the work hitherto undertaken by his predecessors. I believe the present able First Naval Lord has privately a plan of preparation; but if this is so, it only emphasises the necessity for such a scheme being considered by the Board,<sup>1</sup> and is an indication of his patriotism in adding to his already overcrowded duties by devoting his spare time to so important a matter. To meet the difficulty of the extra duties entailed, I submit the following proposal:—

“*Proposal.*—I would extend the present *Foreign Intelligence Committee*, doing away with that nomenclature, and call it the Intelli-

<sup>1</sup> As at present constituted, the new War Staff is not placed in direct communication with the Board.

gence Department, dividing it into sections 1 and 2. The Head of this Department should be an Admiral, with a staff of junior captains, two lieutenants or commanders, two marine officers, one higher division clerk, three lower division clerks, and two writers.

“The admiral should eventually be a permanent appointment, and he and the captains would receive, in addition to their *half-pay*, the salaries shown in the accompanying list. The captains could be readily procured, as they are generally on compulsory half-pay for three to four years after their promotion. The lieutenants (or commanders) should receive their *full-pay*, in addition to salaries named, because, owing to our being so short of these officers, they would be actually on *full-pay*, if not employed in the way indicated.

“The Marines are always on full-pay; the extra lower division clerk and writer proposed above the number already employed in the present Foreign Intelligence Committee would probably be obtained from some other department of the Admiralty. . . .

“If the organisation I propose is carried into effect, then, for the small sum of £250, we would be, at least, better prepared for war. We know that our fleet is very short of cruisers, torpedo-boats, gun-vessels, and gun-boats, and, speaking generally, is *not in the state of strength* it should be. It appears *wicked and criminal* to me to delay a moment

in organising what we have got, and formulating a plan for calling, at any moment, on our vast resources. The scheme which £250 gives us will not only save millions in the prevention of scares and panics, but prevent most probably an actual disaster on the first commencement of hostilities. The gloomy and threatening appearances in the East make it a matter of Imperial necessity that a plan of preparation for war *should be taken in hand at once.*

“I would most earnestly entreat the present Board with all the fervour at my command, not to neglect this question for another moment; we have some of the most able naval officers of great experience, judgment, and practical knowledge, who could instantly take the position suggested as head of the Intelligence Department. The keen anxiety I feel upon this question will be sufficient excuse for my mentioning names in this paper. We have an officer on the present Board eminently suited for the position (which for many apparent reasons ought to be held by an Admiral). I refer to Sir Anthony Hoskins, while outside the Board there is Sir William Dowell and Vice-Admiral Nowell Salmon.

“I do not say that my plan is the best or only plan for grappling with the immediate danger. Perhaps it is not, but that is easily remedied by debate and consideration.

“ But I do, most *distinctly and emphatically*, say with all the power at my command, that the very gravest state of affairs would occur to this country if war was declared with a first-rate maritime Power, simply through want of organisation, forethought, and ordinary common sense, which would be simply ludicrous if not so perilous.

“ I am confident that the country as well as the service would be simply aghast, and filled with justifiable anger, if they fully understood the *utter absence of any plan or preparation for war*, and the immense loss which would instantly accrue to this colossal Empire through the neglect of such preparation if war were suddenly declared.

“ In conclusion, the questions I would ask the Board are these :—

“ 1. Can it be denied that the gravest and most certain danger exists to the country if the facts stated in this paper are true ?

“ 2. Can it be denied that these facts *are* true ?

“ 3. If they are, should not *immediate steps* be taken to minimise the danger ? ”

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