

Should the colonies decide to increase the squadron on the station, when it is effected our position would be: we should know that, while the main forces of the country were striving to defeat the machinations of an enemy, if their efforts were not successful in limiting the area of mischief we should be well able, at all events, for a time, to take care of ourselves, and when our own pursuing fleet arrived we should be able to unite hand in hand with it for one common object.

To facilitate the advent of our squadron, armed dépôts are maintained on the great lines of trade and commerce, we have squadrons of greater or less strength in every sea, which, with the armed places above referred to, impede the movements of an enemy while they greatly assist our friends.

How best to create a naval sea-going force localised to the Australasian seas is now approaching consideration. If vessels of war are to be added, at the cost of the colonies, to the existing squadron, it is necessary to secure harmonious action and working with the main fleet of the country, if full effect is to be obtained from such an additional force. This can only be secured when the discipline, instruction, and practice is similar; without harmony in these respects there is a serious source of weakness. There should be no question as to responsibility, or as to the relative position of officers. There should be a flow of promotion. Neither officers nor men should be kept too long on any station. An acquaintance with modern appliances and implements of war must be maintained, and they should have a knowledge of the condition of those against whom they may have to act in war. The use of mechanical appliances for so many purposes on board modern ships of war, and the increasing delicacy of those appliances and weapons call for highly-trained crews. To secure the strength that is due to training when it exists throughout a whole force, those portions of it to which special duties are relegated, and which, in point of numbers, are relatively small, must adapt themselves to the system that prevails with the majority. The total strength of the *personnel* of Her Majesty's fleet is, including reserves, approximately 102,000. Practically all seamen in Her Majesty's fleet are entered as boys, and are trained, before going to sea, in special vessels. They enter for twelve years, and subsequently can renew their engagements for ten more, and then become entitled to a pension. It is not practical to propose that men of the same rank and position, performing the same duty and serving in the same ship, should receive widely different rates of pay or be entered on widely different conditions.

There are ports that require a considerable amount of naval force for their defences—Melbourne, for instance: Port Phillip cannot be denied to an enemy by batteries and mine-fields alone. There a local naval force of very considerable strength is already called into existence. Some ports only require a few torpedo-boats. Queensland possesses gun vessels well suited for service off her coral-girt shores. South Australia has a vessel of another type altogether that is specially well adapted for the service she was designed to render; and of the efficiency and reliability of these forces I am glad to bear personal testimony. It is not proposed to make any change in what has been so far well done with reference to such local forces.

The immediate subject for consideration refers to sea-going vessels of war. Are these colonies desirous to provide them for the defence of these seas? And in such case, how best to give effect to their desire? And I venture to say it is difficult to conceive a more important subject. These colonies have no frontiers save those imposed by nature. Should an enemy ever appear, he must come from over the sea.

It will be noted that the types of ships recommended are essentially sea-going vessels, that are formidable whatever may be the nature of the opposing force. They are also well adapted to play a prominent part, if needs be, in a local defence; yet they are not of a class that could be readily sent out to distant seas from Home at an hour of need; a task that would be well performed by the new fast armoured ships, or by the protected vessels that form a part of Her Majesty's navy, and which are designed for protracted distant service at sea, and with which these proposed vessels are admirably adapted to co-operate.

I may mention that the subject of the defence given by the navy to colonies and commerce, and of the maintenance of armed dépôts throughout the world, has recently been prominently before the Parliament in London, and as a result to a special debate £3,100,000 was voted in December, 1884, for an increase to the navy, and a large additional vote was granted for defensive works abroad. The direction of the view taken is sufficiently shown by observing the type of vessel ordered, which is given under the estimate upon which the calculation of £3,100,000 was made: One armour-plated ship, five belted cruisers, ten "scouts," two rams, and thirty torpedo-boats.

A reference to the summary of naval estimates for the years from 1881 to 1885 will show the growth of naval expenditure: 1881-82, £10,945,919; 1882-83, £12,110,426; 1883-84, £10,899,500; 1884-85, £11,507,970; 1885-86, £15,186,500. In 1882-83 there was a vote of credit of £1,276,525, and in 1885-86 an estimated vote of credit of £2,800,000, which sums are included in the above. Equally interesting are the tables of figures which show the total actual and estimated expenditure on ship-building and ordnance between 1875 and 1886, which show that the sums varied from £3,772,601 in 1875-76 to an estimate of £6,102,652 for 1885-86.

There is no desire whatever, I am assured, to avoid any of the responsibilities due to the maintenance of the Empire, growing as they do grow with its ever increasing population and wealth, particularly in these great colonies. I am authorized to say there is a full determination to continue to bear the task. While we as a nation grow with amazing strides, an ever-increasing naval protection is required. Other nations also grow, but in no instance has another nation such a wide-world task; in no instance is the task that falls to their navy appreciably increased with the growing wealth and population of their country, when compared to the case of the British Empire.

This memorandum is written on my own responsibility. It is but a *sequiter* to the memoranda and papers which have been written by the Premiers and by others on the same subject within these colonies. It is what it professes to be—a simple statement of the views of a sailor occupying the position I do, from a national aspect, with Australasia in the foreground.