

6. The memorandum proceeded to state that it was recognized that other considerations than those of strategy alone must be taken into account, such, for example, as individual national sentiment. It was mentioned that a simple contribution of money or material might be the most acceptable form of assistance to one Dominion, whilst others might desire to lay the foundation of a future navy of their own; and it was stated that the main duty of the Conference would be to determine the form in which the various Dominion Governments could best participate in the burden of Imperial defence with due regard to political and geographical considerations.

7. The composition of the navy to be created by any Dominion desirous of adopting this policy was also suggested, and the necessity for the construction of the works required for its maintenance was mentioned. Emphasis was laid on the necessity for a common standard of design of ship, armament, training and discipline.

8. The necessity for the creation of a strong fleet in the Pacific was recognized by the Imperial Conference of 1909, and in the Prime Minister's statement in the British House of Commons in August of that year he mentioned the fact that the remodelling of the squadrons in Far Eastern waters was considered on the basis of establishing a Pacific Fleet.

9. The menace of the rapidly increasing German Fleet, however, led to the arrangements agreed upon in the 1909 Conference being considerably modified, with a consequent weakening of the Pacific Fleet. In 1902 there were 160 British war-vessels on the overseas stations, as against 76 in 1912. The underlying causes of this weakening of our fleets abroad were financial. The burden of naval armaments was pressing hard on the British taxpayer, and naval building programmes suffered as the result.

The financial burden imposed on the Empire by the late war, and the large share of this burden which falls upon the Mother Country, will inevitably have a similar result; and although the German naval menace has now disappeared, it will be seen by a perusal of the table at the end of Chapter I in this volume, and in Chapter IX, Volume II, that very considerable naval efforts are required in the future by the people of the British Empire if we are still to maintain that supremacy at sea which is and has always been held to be vital to the existence of the Empire, and which recent events have once again emphasized so unmistakably.

Experience in the late war has certainly strengthened the views expressed in 1909.

Although, in the case of an enemy near the British Islands, the general defence of the sea communications of the Empire will always be given by the main fleets operating in the decisive theatre near that enemy, war experience has shown the necessity, among other things, of the Empire possessing much greater naval strength abroad than has been the case during the present century.

10. The arrangement entered into with New Zealand in 1909 was that the battle-cruiser "New Zealand" should form the flagship of the fleet unit on the China Station, and that two second-class cruisers, three destroyers, and two submarines would be detached from that unit in peace time to work normally in