

8. On the 7th September H.M.S. "Diomedé" returned to Auckland for a short stay and then proceeded to Wellington. An epidemic of influenza occurred while at Auckland, the daily sick list rising to as many as sixty. Its duration, however, was short.

9. From Wellington the ship carried out a circuit of the South Island, visiting the West Coast Sounds, Bluff, Dunedin, Oamaru, Timaru, Lyttelton, Akaroa, and thence Wellington. Christmas leave to those ratings domiciled in the South Island was given while at Lyttelton, and a guard and band attended the Armistice Day ceremonies at Christchurch.

10. H.M.S. "Dunedin" left Wellington for Auckland on the 26th November. Whilst on passage to Auckland a visit was made to Napier. This was the first visit since the occasion of the earthquake. The ship was berthed at Glasgow Wharf.

11. Gunnery and torpedo exercises were carried out in the Hauraki Gulf before arrival at Auckland for the Christmas period on the 9th December.

12. Until the 15th February, 1932, H.M.S. "Diomedé" remained at Auckland. Christmas leave was given, the ship dry-docked, and the Royal Marine detachment carried out their annual musketry training at Penrose Military Camp.

While in the stream on the occasion of the Auckland Anniversary Regatta, H.M.S. "Diomedé" was placed at the disposal of the Regatta Committee for use as their flagship. His Excellency the Governor-General honoured the ship with his presence during the day.

13. In February H.M.S. "Diomedé" carried out further exercises in the Hauraki Gulf, and on the 25th February proceeded on a northern cruise to Russell and Whangaroa.

14. Following an invitation from the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, H.M.S. "Diomedé" sailed from Whangaroa on the 10th March to take part in strategical exercises at sea with the Royal Australian Squadron. At the conclusion thereof the ships taking part proceeded to Sydney in company and participated in the ceremonies connected with the official opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

15. After completion of the visit, H.M.S. "Diomedé" returned to Nelson, and during the passage across the Tasman Sea, shortly after midnight on the 22nd-23rd March, an Imperial rating, Able Seaman Charles Jonathan Ribbins, O.N. C/J. 30155, was washed overboard and drowned. The tragic occurrence took place while certain additional precautions against the threatening weather were being carried out, and though search was continued for two hours in somewhat heavy seas it was without success. A full investigation by a Court of inquiry was held, the minutes of which have been forwarded to the Naval Board.

16. After a short visit to Nelson the ship proceeded to Picton, where she lies on the concluding date of this report.

#### *H.M.S. "Dunedin."*

On the 1st April, 1931, H.M.S. "Dunedin" (Captain Martin J. C. de Meric, M.V.O., Royal Navy) was at Colombo on passage to the United Kingdom for a long refit.

2. Subsequently during the voyage the ship called at Aden, Suez, Port Said, Malta, and Gibraltar, all the visits being of short duration. Opportunity was taken while at Malta, the headquarters of the British Mediterranean Fleet, for the New Zealand ratings to visit H.M.S. "Ramillies" (29,150 tons, eight 15 in. guns, twelve 6 in. guns) as a representative British battleship.

3. H.M.S. "Dunedin" arrived at Sheerness on the 7th May, 1931, the New Zealand flag having thus completed a circuit of the world since October, 1930. The ship proceeded to Chatham and was then paid off into dockyard control for large repairs.

4. Subsequently a proposal initiated by the New Zealand Government as a measure of economy to retard the cruiser's completion by three months was agreed to by the Admiralty. By this means a part of the cost of the repairs has been transferred from last financial year to that for 1932-33, and thus has afforded relief during the existing period of financial stress. It must be borne in mind, however, that this decision, and its acceptance by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, affected the British Government both administratively and financially; Imperial officers and men to the number of approximately 300, who would have joined the ship on her preparation for service on the original date, remaining a charge to the Admiralty for an additional period of three months.

Further, for strategic reasons, the Admiralty were naturally reluctant that the New Zealand Squadron should be under strength for a longer period than is absolutely necessary.

5. H.M.S. "Dunedin" will now commission at the end of May, 1932, and will arrive at Auckland for further service on the Station in August, 1932.

#### V. PROCEEDINGS (H.M. SLOOPS).

On the 1st April, 1931, the Imperial sloops were located as follows:—

H.M.S. "Veronica" (Commander H. L. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N.) at Lyttelton in the course of a South Island cruise, and H.M.S. "Laburnum" (Commander C. E. Hotham, D.S.C., R.N.) at Wellington on the conclusion of a similar cruise.

2. H.M.S. "Veronica" joined H.M. Ships "Diomedé" and "Laburnum" at Wellington on the 2nd April, and the sloops then carried out their annual musketry training.

3. From Wellington H.M.S. "Laburnum" proceeded direct to Auckland on the 4th May for refit and docking; H.M.S. "Veronica" visited Wanganui, New Plymouth, and Whangaroa, finally also arriving at Auckland on the 21st May. I flew my broad pendant in H.M.S. "Veronica" for the visit to Wanganui, and subsequently rejoined H.M.S. "Diomedé" by land.