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AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND
AND IMPERIAL NAVAL DEFENCE
1902-13

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey University.

MATTHEW JOHN WRIGHT

1986
ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the naval defence policies of New Zealand and, for comparative purposes, Australia, as they developed during the 1902-13 period, with the intention of outlining some of the major reasons for the policies of these two Dominions taking the form that they did.

The basic theme of the argument is that the naval defence policies of Australia and New Zealand during the period were elicited by the difference between the defence perceptions of these two Dominions and that of the Admiralty. Both Dominions felt themselves to be isolated in the South Pacific and saw as enemies not only the European powers feared by Britain but also the Japanese. British levels of defence in the area were therefore seen as inadequate by the Dominions, and both reacted to the situation by attempting to strengthen Imperial defence as a whole.

Where they differed was in their approach to this reinforcement. Australia directed its attention to the periphery, seeking by creating a local navy to relieve Britain of the burden of defence and at the same time to satisfy local nationalistic desires for a fleet. This approach was not received well by the Admiralty, and successive Australian proposals from 1902 to 1909 were rejected.
New Zealand, by contrast, looked to the centre, seeking to strengthen the Royal Navy and thus indirectly to strengthen the peripheral defences. This policy found its expression in the government of Sir Joseph Ward when in 1908 Ward unexpectedly increased New Zealand's naval subsidy to Britain by 150%, and when in 1909 he offered to buy a dreadnought type battleship for Britain.

By the terms of the 1909 Naval Agreement, New Zealand would have received some local defence in the form of several cruisers from the China 'Fleet Unit'. To this extent Ward's policy worked, but ironically it was the Australian policy which met with the greatest success in providing the local defence that both Dominions desired. By the 1909 Agreement the Australians were allowed to build a 'Fleet Unit' of their own, and thus was the only such unit ultimately completed in the Empire. In 1911, the British declared their intention not to establish the China Unit, since the ships which had been built for that squadron were now required in the North Sea to counter the German naval build-up. This left New Zealand in the position where many New Zealanders felt it to be defenceless, and the Reform government of William Massey was forced to take steps towards providing ships for New Zealand independently of Britain. This did not however represent an adoption of Australian ideas; rather, this move had been forced on the Massey government by necessity.

It is nevertheless clear from their actions that both Dominions took, that they were as one with the British in their determination to act together to face their perceived enemies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR - Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives.

CD - Command Paper.

CID - Committee of Imperial Defence.


DA - Documents on Australian International Affairs

DNC - Director of Naval Construction

DNI - Director of Naval Intelligence

FG - Fear God and Dread Nought (Fisher's collected letters)

FP - The Fisher Papers

JP - The Jellicoe Papers

NZPD - New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
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INTRODUCTION

The provision of adequate naval defence for this country has been a major problem facing most New Zealand governments to date. The great expense of military equipment relative to the size of both the economy and population has meant that we have almost always had to make do with less than that which many of our governments have felt desirable.

Historical analysis has shown that many New Zealanders perceived a shortfall in defence capability even during the period when we were a part of the British Empire, during which time the onus of New Zealand's naval defence rested upon the Royal Navy. Detailed studies have been made in particular of the situation as it developed during the inter-war period.¹ My thesis looks at the period immediately prior to the First World War, analysing the defence shortfall as perceived in New Zealand and, for comparative purposes, Australia, and looking at the defence policies elicited by the supposed failure on the part of the British to defend their Dominions.

The basic theme of this thesis is that the naval defence policies of both New Zealand and Australia during this period can best be seen

in the imperial context. During this period, the South Pacific was viewed by the Admiralty and by the two Dominions as a single strategic unit. But the perceptions of the kind of threats faced by the Dominions within this unit differed. The Admiralty felt that the major threat to the area devolved from the British Empire's European enemies and hence that to strengthen British forces in European waters would protect the distant Dominions from attack. This view was partly shared by both Australia and New Zealand, but they also saw Britain's ally Japan as a potential future foe. In any case neither Dominion entirely agreed with the idea of their defence being entirely in European waters. The sense of vulnerability felt by both Dominions was heightened by their geographical isolation, which was keenly felt even though in a cultural sense the affinities of both Dominions were very much closer to those of Britain than they are today.

The general feeling in both Dominions with regard to naval defence at the beginning of this century was that Britain had somehow failed to provide what was necessary. It was in response to this that both Dominions developed their respective naval defence policies, the general aim by both being to strengthen imperial defence as a whole, and thus to see an improvement in the level of their local defence.

The means by which the two Dominions went about achieving this aim were quite different. Whereas Australia attempted to directly strengthen forces in her waters and thus to indirectly release British forces for elsewhere, by building a local navy, New Zealand attempted to strengthen the Royal Navy directly and in this manner to release forces from elsewhere for the protection of the New Zealand coastline.

A combination of factors, which applied in slightly differing ways to both Dominions, led to their defence policies taking the shape that they did during the period. In addition to the overall difference of perception which basically elicited the development
of policy, one can point also to factors such as the relative economic and political positions of the two Dominions; their position with regard to other Pacific powers such as the United States; their bilateral relationship with one-another; and the degree of nationalistic feeling present in both Dominions, as well as to the effect of individual personalities and of major events such as the 1909 naval crisis, as having a significant effect on the shaping of the policies followed by both Dominions.

This theme when applied to the events of the period has provided the interpretation given in the argument of this thesis. In general form this is as follows.

The Admiralty, particularly after the reforms of 1904-06, felt that it was fulfilling its obligation to defend the Empire. This view was not shared, however, by the two South Pacific Dominions, whose uneasiness concerning Japanese motives was the principal factor leading them to question British defence. However, while New Zealand was content initially to rely upon the protection of Britain, the Australians went ahead with persistent demands for permission to build a local fleet.

The first Australian proposals in this direction in 1902 were motivated by a complex of factors, principally the trade and emigration 'threats' seen as coming from Japan as a result of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of that year. But stirrings of nationalism also had their place, and a desire to be seen to aid the mother country in the protection of the Empire, and thus to appear to be the foremost of the Dominions, also cannot be discounted.

These proposals were rejected, but further proposals in 1905 were made, these being motivated principally by the perhaps irrational fear (in view of the fact that Britain was allied to Japan) of Japanese military aggression in the South Pacific. The 1905 proposals too were
rejected, but the Australians, undeterred, continued to make similar naval proposals for a further three years.

New Zealand took no action until 1908, when the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, increased the annual naval subsidy being paid to Britain in return for local defence, by some one hundred and fifty percent. This was followed less than a year later by his March 1909 offer to pay for a dreadnought-type battleship for Britain.

Both moves have been attributed to blind patriotism on the part of Ward, but he was in fact motivated by a number of factors of which a patriotism towards Britain was but one. He principally wished to take a course of action which would not only strengthen imperial defence as a whole, but which would also, as a result not only of this reinforcement but also of gratitude on the part of Britain, lead to greater naval forces being stationed in New Zealand waters. This concept was in part a result of his thinking concerning imperial co-operation. But there were also other factors, including a desire on Ward's part to materially aid Britain in her armaments race with Germany; to put New Zealand ahead of Australia in the estimation of the British; to draw attention away from some of his internal policies; to follow a policy which was within New Zealand's financial means and yet which might conceivably give greater value in return; and perhaps not least, to bring a degree of public acclaim upon himself which would not otherwise have generated.

Ward's dreadnought offer led to the 1909 Imperial Conference at

2. Sir Joseph George Ward, Bart, K.C.M.G, G.C.M.G, P.C., 1856-1930. Succeeded Richard Seddon as Liberal Prime Minister, 1906-12, was part of wartime coalition leadership, then Prime Minister again from 1928 until shortly before his death in 1930.

which the Admiralty successfully negotiated a solution by which the
defence policies expressed by both Dominions could be integrated in
to the overall framework of imperial defence. By the 1909 Naval Ag­
reement, the Pacific was to be defended by three 'Fleet Units', of
which Australia was to build and maintain one, and New Zealand to
aid in the construction of a second. Cruisers and destroyers from
this unit were, at Ward's insistence, to be stationed in New Zeal­
and waters, although the unit itself was to be based at Hong Kong.

By early 1912, however, it was clear that the pressure of the
naval race with Germany would prevent Britain from fulfilling her
obligations under the Agreement, and that no ships would arrive to
defend New Zealand's local waters apart from two obsolete cruisers
which Britain agreed to send as a form of compensation.

The Reform government of William Massey⁴ was placed in an awk­
ward position, particularly as New Zealand was now committed to pay­
ing for the battlecruiser authorised as a result of Ward's offer,
and there was little further money available for naval defence.

Massey's Minister of Defence, Colonel James Allen, had for
some time been pressing for the construction of a local New Zealand
navy. When in late 1913 Massey authorised a Bristol class cruiser
for New Zealand, however, it was not in response to Allen's ideas.
Rather, he had been forced into this action by the British refusal
to supply such a vessel, and he was in fact merely taking the only
course of action that remained open to him in order to restore the
naval defence position of New Zealand to that which it had been
before Britain had withdrawn the promised cruisers. The essential
differences of approach between Australia and New Zealand thus
remained.

4. William Ferguson Massey, 1856-1925. Prime Minister 1912-14, 1919-25,
Coalition Prime Minister 1914-19.
In some respects this thesis does not break entirely new ground. Studies have been made before of imperial defence during the period. These studies have not, however, addressed the specific issues covered in this thesis, or approached the subject from the same angle. The argument of this thesis relates to existing material on two levels; the specific and the thematic.

On the specific level there are several points throughout the argument where the conclusions drawn disagree with those drawn by other analysts. For instance, the assertion that Ward was motivated by something more than patriotism in making his dreadnought offer is something which has not previously been suggested; earlier analysts, such as N.G. Howard, have restricted their comments to the idea that Ward was promoting British interests, and that, as Howard put it, Ward's offer 'gave an expression to New Zealand's nascent nationalism'.

Other examples where the thesis argument relates to the assertions made by historians will be dealt with in detail at the relevant places in the text. As a comment at this point, it should be mentioned that divergence of opinion is not necessarily an indication that the earlier analysts were wrong. Interpretations by historians invariably reflect the imperatives of the time, which can change quite dramatically. Historians are also limited by availability of data, and frequently a point will be made which is essentially secondary to the main line of argument, and hence where only minimal research has been performed. Such points are often open to later re-interpretation on the basis of new research. Such has been the case here with regard to many of the existing secondary materials.

On the thematic level this thesis relates to existing material in several areas. One theme running through many of the existing studies of the period is that of developing nationalism, the many differences in view between the British and those in the Dominions being seen as symptomatic of a growing sense of nationalistic character in both Dominions. Angus Ross, for instance, in his *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* felt that a definite, New Zealand based colonial policy had been followed by the Vogel and Seddon administrations in the South Pacific. This policy had overlain their greater aim of expanding the Empire for Britain. A similar view was taken by Bernard Gordon in *New Zealand Becomes a Nation* in which he felt that New Zealand underwent a kind of nationalistic transformation during the latter part of the nineteenth century, which led to the largely unsuccessful scrabble for island colonies. Such nationalism has also been seen in other foreign relations. R.M. Dalziel argued in *The Origins of New Zealand Diplomacy* that the post of Agent-General in London represented the first concrete beginnings of New Zealand's foreign service.

Australian historiography has evidently taken a similar thematic line. According to Neville Meaney, much analysis of the period has been overshadowed by 'assertions that Australia's defence concerns were inspired by a status-conscious nationalism'. The implication that Australia's desire for a semi-independent navy represented an


expression of growing nationalism and independence from Britain has also been made about Massey's 1913 decision to have a light cruiser provided for New Zealand.

But while studies such as those discussed above have without doubt contributed greatly to an understanding of the period, they can arguably be considered to a certain degree to reflect contemporary de-colonisation. It is all too easy to over-emphasise the independence of the two Dominions and thus to impute meaning into their actions which may not necessarily have been there. One must not forget, after all, that both Dominions were very much a part of the Empire. Most of their trade was with Britain; many of their citizens were born in Britain; and indeed, most considered themselves to be British. These sentiments were particularly true of New Zealand.

While one cannot ignore the stirrings of nationalism that were undeniably taking place at this time, it is necessary to see them in perspective. The implication of historiography, therefore, that many of the Dominions' actions were explicable in terms of their own growing sense of independence, is perhaps premature when applied to this period. Relating this back to the thesis, it becomes evident that certain assumptions have been made in the secondary material that are not necessarily so when this material is seen in the perspective of its underlying framework.

The second major area where there is a thematic interaction between my thesis and existing materials is that of relevant contributing factors. Frequently in drawing conclusions, existing material will attempt to refute particular factors and to promote others. It is my contention in this thesis, however, that when examining a subject such as defence it is impossible to look at any particular factor and to deny or assert its relevance. Rather, one must consider that all identifiable factors had some degree of relevance
in determining the final outcome of events, and seek instead to explore the inter-relationships between these factors, and to discover their relative effect.

To summarise this exposition of the basic thesis theme and argument, then, it can be said that the aim is to examine in detail an aspect of naval defence in the South Pacific in a manner which embodies an awareness of some of the difficulties inherent in such a study. By placing this study of Dominion defence policies in the context of imperial defence it has been possible to make an analysis from an angle not previously taken, and thus to come to conclusions which in many respects shed somewhat greater light upon the period than those of earlier studies.
CHAPTER ONE
BRITISH NAVAL POLICY, 1904–1913

British naval policy as manifested during the 1904–13 period represented in many respects an attempt to come to grips with a problem that had been facing Britain since the late nineteenth century; that of coping with the growing gap between the Royal Navy's capability to defend the Empire, and the naval power of those nations that threatened British possessions and trade routes. As such, British policy was quite new in some respects, this being particularly so after 1904, when under the leadership of the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Fisher, the Admiralty attempted to use extensive technical innovations and new strategic concepts to hold on to British naval superiority.

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the development and application of these concepts as they related to the two South Pacific Dominions. This discussion forms the basis of the thesis.

argument in that it was against the background of the Admiralty's policies during the period that the two Dominions saw their naval position, and in the context of the Admiralty's innovations that they acted.

The dilemma facing Britain in 1904 had been developing since the early 1880's. A brief summary of these developments is relevant at this point: it must be stressed however that this summary, because of its brevity, does not do full justice to the complex and partly causal inter-relationship between British naval strength and foreign policy, or indeed with Britain's relations with other nations in most areas. It is sufficient here to acknowledge that developments were by no means straightforward, and indeed that in many instances developments took place due to a subtle blend of circumstance. Although the period has been the subject of analysis by historians, particularly in recent years, many of what follows has been presented in greater detail in the late Arthur Marder's work The Anatomy of British Sea Power.

Prior to the 1880's, British naval power had ensured that her trade links would remain secure in wartime, and had deterred other nations from taking any overt military stance against Britain or her Empire. Naval strength directly protected both Britain and her island Dominions. Other powers, principally Russia, were deterred from attacking British continental possessions such as India because


Britain's naval threat to their seaborne trade was not insignificant. Britain's ability to maintain naval superiority was based on her economic power, which was considerable, and on the fact that unlike her two potential enemies, France and Russia, she did not have to maintain a large army as well.

But from the 1880's onwards, both France and Russia began to engage in naval building programmes designed to assert their naval power. The initial British response was to increase her own naval construction, this being done at first in spurts as a result of several 'scares'.

The first such scare, in 1884, led to the 'Northbrook Programme' by which some 3,100,000 pounds was to be spent over the succeeding five years on ships, and some 2,400,000 pounds on static works and ordnance. Then in 1888 a further scare led to the 1889 'Naval Defence Act', authorising some 21,500,000 pounds to be spent over the next three years on the construction of a wide range of new ships, including eight first-class battleships of unprecedented size and power.

Coincident with the introduction of the Act, a new standard was established by which the Royal Navy was to be of 'such a scale that it should be at least equal to the naval strength of any two other countries'. This standard gained considerable public support and led to the 1893 scare following which seven battleships were authorised when it was feared that the British were falling behind their new measure of superiority.

The result of these scares, of the more controlled rate of building between them, and of the introduction of what is generally known as the

4. Marder, pp 122 & 143.
5. Ibid, p 106. Marder was quoting Lord George Hamilton, then First Sea Lord of the Admiralty.
'White' type battleship, after its designer, was that by the middle 1890's the Royal Navy was by far the most powerful in the world. It was questionable as to whether this superiority could be maintained, however. Not only were France and Russia both engaging in major building programmes of their own during this period, but several other industrial powers, notably Japan, Germany and the United States, were also constructing navies of their own. While all three nations were then, relatively speaking, on friendly terms with Britain, the possibility of rivalry at some future time was not unthinkable. As Marder remarked, 'Naval policy remained intimately linked with foreign policy'. A number of political changes took place during the period which had their effect on the situation, this at first being to relieve the growing severity of the British naval position. According to G.W. Monger, it was primarily the Russian naval threat in the Far East which led the British to formulate their alliance with Japan in 1902. Later, after protracted negotiations, war with France was made somewhat more remote by the British signing of the Entente, or 'friendly' agreement. This did not instantly end Admiralty speculations as to possible French wartime aims, however: as late as April 1905 Fisher was still worrying about the French 'submarine menace' which might force British ships to withdraw to Alexandria in wartime.

10. Arthur Marder, ed, Fear God and Dread Nought (Fisher's collected letters. London 1952-58) II p 54. Hereafter referred to as F.G.
Britain had been spurred to reach agreement with France partly by the fact that Germany was at that time becoming the dominant power in Europe. Although in 1900 the German naval menace to Britain was slight, the situation changed dramatically over the next decade, with the result that by 1910 it was freely admitted by Britain that her naval construction was almost exclusively directed towards countering that of Germany. 11

It is clear from this summary that the naval defence of the Empire was not only closely related to political events and to foreign relations, but was also something which was taken very seriously by the British government and people.

Responsibility for the maintenance of this defence rested with the Admiralty; indeed, it was to the Admiralty that Cabinet looked for the basic formulation of all the naval defence policies ultimately adopted by the British, within the general framework of foreign relations as defined by Cabinet.

In theory, the Admiralty should have been subject to advice from Cabinet, the War Office, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and also the Committee of Imperial Defence. Actually, this was not the case, and the Admiralty, particularly under the Fisher administration from 1904 to 1910, pursued its own course. Even after Fisher had retired, the Admiralty remained subject to few influences. As late as April 1912, for instance, the Foreign Office objected to an Admiralty plan to withdraw the last battleships from the Mediterranean, on the

11. Development of this naval threat has been the subject of much analysis. Notable works in the field include Marder's *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* (London 1960), I: Peter Padfield *The Great Naval Race* (London 1974); also Paul Kennedy 'Fisher and Tirpitz: Political Admirals in the Age of Imperialism' from Gerald Jordan, ed, *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century* (Croom-Helm, London 1977) pp 45-59; and for a historiographical summary see Ruddock Mackay 'Historical Re-Interpretations of the Anglo-German Naval Rivalry, 1897-1914' in *Naval Warfare* pp 32-44.
basis that such a move would drive the Italians closer to the Austro-Hungarians. 12

Even the Committee of Imperial Defence, whose role was supposedly to co-ordinate military, naval and colonial defence, could not change Admiralty policy. An exasperated Viscount Esher, at that time a member of the Committee, complained to his son in December 1909 that 'the Admiralty is very obstructive...we come to decisions, and they are treated as the amiable aberrations of a few well meaning but harmless amateur strategists'. 13

This lack of co-operation was such that, as pointed out by J.P. Mackintosh in his study of the role of the CID prior to 1914, the Admiralty as late as August 1911 had conflicting plans with the War Office for meeting a German attack. 14 Mackintosh offered no explanation but it could well be that the obstinacy displayed by the Admiralty during the period stemmed partly from their long tradition of independent policy formulation, and partly from the direct influence of Fisher, who during his term as First Sea Lord steadfastly refused to accept views other than his own.

Traditionally the Admiralty had always been very much a law unto its own, and the policies that the Board formulated were generally regarded by Cabinet as coming from experts. This attitude was still very much the case in the early twentieth century, even though developments had rendered the job of policy formulation something more than merely applying seafaring expertise and strategies to the situation in hand.


Fisher also had undoubted influence. Described by the Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith, as 'domineering and combatative'\textsuperscript{15} and by Maurice Hankey as a 'hurricane',\textsuperscript{16} Fisher tolerated no opposition. According to his biographer Ruddock Mackay, Fisher once stormed up to Captain G. le C. Egerton at a conference, shook his fist in the latter's face, and bellowed that: 'If you oppose my education scheme, I shall crush you'.\textsuperscript{17} Not one to make idle threats, he did indeed ruin the careers of several who opposed him and was well known for his pursuit of often senseless vendettas. His motto, with which he prefaced his 1904 reform scheme was: 'We must be Ruthless, Relentless and Remorseless!',\textsuperscript{18} a phrase which could well have been applied to Fisher himself. He dominated the Admiralty, easily asserting himself over two successive First Lords of the Admiralty, Lord Selborne and Lord Tweedmouth, the latter of whom resigned early as a result of Fisher's pressure. The one First Lord with whom Fisher got along well was Reginald McKenna,\textsuperscript{19} but even so, by 1909 cries of 'one man rule' were frequently being made in the popular press.\textsuperscript{20}

It was this man who was the dynamo behind the revolutionary changes which took place in the Royal Navy between 1904 and 1910 and which transformed it from a Victorian colossus into an efficient

\textsuperscript{15} H.H. Asquith \textit{The Genesis of the War} (London 1923) p 112.
\textsuperscript{16} Maurice Hankey \textit{The Supreme Command} (London 1961), I p 24.
\textsuperscript{17} Ruddock Mackay \textit{Fisher of Kilverstone} (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973), p 289.
\textsuperscript{19} Evidently because Fisher liked McKenna's wife, Pamela.
\textsuperscript{20} See, e.g., letters to the \textit{Times}, April-May 1909. Fisher of course denied such allegations, but even so it was clear that the 'band of brothers' idea behind the operations of the Board had been severely stretched.
fighting force which was, to quote Fisher, at 'INSTANT READINESS FOR WAR!'.\textsuperscript{21}

The manifold changes introduced by Fisher affected virtually every aspect of the navy: those changes pertinent to this thesis are his strategic and materiel reforms, which were closely interlinked and which drastically altered the method by which Britain maintained her naval defence. Because Fisher's theories and ideas were in many respects quite new, many observers failed to grasp what he was doing, with the result that it appeared to many - including some in the Dominions - that the Admiralty was shirking its imperial responsibilities.

Fisher's strategic reforms involved the application of the Blue Water school to ship distribution. The antithesis of the Brick and Mortar school of thought, by which the navy alone could not ensure security from invasion, this Blue Water theory was derived from the writings of both Captain Colombs and also from the writings of Rear-Admiral Mahan,\textsuperscript{22} and had been bandied about in British naval circles since the late 1880's. As a theory it was subject to intense controversy, and only Fisher was bold enough to put it into practice.

According to the Blue Water theory, the thin distribution of naval forces around the world, as favoured by Victorian naval planners, was suicidal since such a force was weak everywhere. The Blue Water theory instead dictated a careful concentration of force in

\textsuperscript{21} F.P., I p 17.

\textsuperscript{22} Marder, Anatomy p 68. Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1940-1914, was an American naval thinker whose ideas influenced naval developments during the late 19th century. For analysis see e.g. Margaret Tuttle Sprout 'Mahan, Evangelist of Sea Power' from E.M.Earle (ed) Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton University Press) Ch. 17, pp 415-445: William Reitzel 'Mahan on Use of the Sea' from B. Mitchell-Simpson III (ed) Ware, Strategy and Maritime Power (Rutger's University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1977) pp 95-107: and for biographical details see e.g. Carlisle Taylor Life of Admiral Mahan (John Murray, London 1920).
a few areas, an overwhelming concentration of power could be brought
to bear where it was needed. Areas left 'undefended' directly were
protected by the strong regional deterrent effect of these forces,
which could attack the rear of an enemy attempting to exploit the
supposed gap.

While these ideas first achieved public recognition in the
writings of Mahan and others, there is some evidence to suggest that
Fisher had come to very similar conclusions, independently, during
his seagoing career. In any case, his application of the theory to
the Royal Navy included a number of quite original innovations.

Fisher identified five key areas, these being the 'five keys
(lock up the world'. Three of these areas - Portsmouth,
Gibraltar and Malta - were to be occupied by major battle fleets.
These were to ensure absolute security against invasion of Britain
and against the cutting of trade routes. They would also seal up
any enemy fleets in the North Sea and Mediterranean, thus securing
the rest of the British Empire against the threat of all but a few
raiding cruisers that might conceivably escape.

One potential weakness of the plan was that it relied absolutely
on the Japanese alliance to ensure maritime security in the Far East:
the five battleships of the China Station were to come home. This
move was, however, halted by Lord Selborne, then the First Lord of
the Admiralty, who minuted 'premature' on the margin of Fisher's
proposal. The Russo-Japanese war was still raging and the First Lord
in fact managed to persuade Fisher to reinforce the small British
fleet at Hong Kong. But before these reinforcements, two battleships

from the Mediterranean, arrived on station, the Japanese victory at Tsushima effectively broke Russian naval power in the Pacific. Fisher promptly withdrew all British battleships from the Pacific. \(^{25}\)

This adoption of Blue Water thinking effectively rendered useless, in Fisher's mind, the ships which had hitherto been scattered across the globe to protect British territories and to be available to directly support British interests should trouble occur. As a result the second major part of Fisher's strategic reform scheme involved the scrapping of some 156 sloops, third-class cruisers and gunboats which had hitherto been fulfilling the duties now assigned to the five 'key' fleets.

As far as Fisher was concerned, these alterations not only ensured continued British superiority, but also permitted a thirty percent cut to be made in the size of the naval Estimates. Indeed, according to Hankey this financial saving was deliberate on Fisher's part, as a means by which he could, and in fact did, gain the speedy approval of Cabinet for the adoption of his schemes. \(^{26}\)

But the view that the changes gave greater security was not shared by all, and those in the Pacific particularly had to face not only the loss of their immediate security, in the form of the small ships, but also the evident loss of their strategic security, in the form of the battleships. Considerable dismay was expressed in the two South Pacific Dominions because, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, an awareness had been gained of the military threat posed by Japan, and while the Australasian Squadron remained untouched, there was little that its few cruisers could do without the support of the other British forces in the Pacific which now no longer existed.

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25. F.P., I p 81, also F.G., II p 59.
The reason for the Admiralty evidently abandoning the Pacific was that Fisher felt that no serious danger lay there, and that the British could rely upon the Japanese, under the terms of the Alliance, to secure British interests in Pacific waters. The strategic distributions which Fisher made were in fact directed purely at potential European enemies. Even the United States was not seen as presenting any significant threat, Fisher's main preoccupation during the 1904-07 period being that 'Russia might...call on her ally France, and at the same time give Germany the opportunity for which Russia's secret ally is eagerly waiting'.27 The possibility of such an alliance still concerned him even after Russian sea power had been destroyed; taking as a precedent the political manoeuverings that had followed the Sino-Japanese war, he wrote that a 'Franco-German-Russian coalition of powers...it is as well to remember, did actually combine...to rob Japan of the fruits of victory'.28

Germany was not seen as the sole likely enemy until later in 1907, when that nation became, in Fisher's opinion, the 'only possible foe'.29 But this simply meant that an even greater concentration of strength was organised for Home waters, to the detriment of even the Mediterranean fleets.30

During this time, Fisher came under considerable criticism for his policies and his strategic reforms,31 but despite the repeated

27. F.P., I p 159.
29. F.G., II p 85.
attempts of his enemies to undermine him, Fisher was able to complete the execution of his plans and to ultimately concentrate, by May 1908, all of Britain's best ships, including her first four dreadnought-type battleships and battlecruisers, in Home waters.32

It is possible that Fisher might well have generated less criticism of his policies, and less ill-feeling over their execution, had his explanation for the uses of the newly formed fleets gone beyond a few vague statements about 'instant' readiness for war. But at no time did he ever reveal his intentions concerning the operations of these fleets, should war actually break out. This notable absence of war plans provoked numerous attacks from his principal opponent, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford; yet when Fisher finally relented in 1907 and issued a set of 'war plans' it was obvious from their extraordinary content that he was merely attempting to deflect his critics, and that his real intentions still remained hidden.33

Fisher's own explanation for his supposed failure to produce any war plans was that to publish them would merely serve to inform the Germans of what the British intended to do in wartime. This was quite true, but it was hardly a convincing reason and perhaps more plausible was the notion forwarded by Paul Haggie in 1973 that 'Fisher's concept of war planning remained old fashioned... Strategic war planning was to remain the sole prerogative of the First Sea Lord and was to be divulged to absolutely no-one'.34 There is also a considerable body of documentary evidence which suggests that

32. F.P., II p 467.
33. Ibid, II p 318-464. An example of this 'extraordinary' content was the evidently serious proposal that when war broke out, the best course of action would be to launch the older battleships in a kamakaze style attack against the German fleet in harbour at Wilhelmshaven.
Fisher, partly out of a desire to accrue fame to himself, and partly because of his domineering approach, intended to personally issue the orders directing the fleets into battle only when the time came.  

This last possible reason seems all the more plausible when one considers the general style of strategic war planning that characterised the Fisher period; all such thinking was dominated by the idea that on the outbreak of war the two opposing fleets would at once emerge from their respective harbours and steam towards the 'second Trafalgar'. The emphasis was thus on the peacetime location and readiness of the fleets, no further planning being deemed necessary since the outcome of the naval war would be decided in a day. Matters such as the long term protection of trade and even the protection of Britain's foreign possessions against enemy attack tended to take second place, the assumption being that the worst that could trouble British possessions outside the North Sea would be raiding cruisers, which could be easily dealt with.

Given this approach to war-planning, then, it is clear how the two Dominions, Australia and New Zealand, not only felt themselves to be abandoned in the Pacific by the British reforms, but also that there was no real justification for the introduction of the new system. Coming as they did at the precise time when awareness of a military danger from Japan was making itself felt in the two Dominions, Fisher's strategic reforms sufficed only to heighten the desires of the Dominions to contribute to their own defence in a more concrete manner than that of simply paying a subsidy to Britain.

But what this chapter also makes clear is that, from the

35. Examples of Fisher actually doing so in wartime are contained in F.C.,III. As the Germans did not obligingly emerge to fight, his orders were perforce limited to directing cruisers about the globe and instructing the Grand Fleet to put to sea.
viewpoint of the Admiralty, the Fisher reforms had not weakened but strengthened the defence of the Empire as a whole, since forces were now concentrated where they were most likely to be used. As far as the Admiralty were concerned, maritime powers against which they had not made dispositions simply did not represent any kind of threat to Britain or to her possessions. Indeed, thanks to Britain's alliance ties, it was even possible to use the naval strength of one such power, Japan, to advantage.

The Board of Admiralty remained secure in its belief that it represented the expert view with regard to all aspects of naval defence, and that the opinions of others were suspect. That the various Colonies and Dominions might see their own situation in a different light was understood but the Admiralty, particularly under Fisher, clearly failed to appreciate that any divergence of opinion could lead to a questioning of what the Admiralty felt to be its obvious success in the continued fulfilment of its traditional role.
CHAPTER TWO

DOMINION PERSPECTIVES

The Admiralty view of the strategic position and naval defence requirements of New Zealand and Australia, which guided the formulation of Admiralty naval defence policy for the region, was not shared by the two Dominions themselves. Indeed, the views of the two Dominions differed quite substantially from those of the Admiralty, and in order to understand precisely how this difference of opinion elicited the formulation of naval policies by the two Dominions, it is necessary to examine the Dominion perceptions in some detail.

On the broader scale, there was much that was shared between Australia and New Zealand. Both Dominions identified the same potential enemies, both perceived very similar pressures emanating from these enemies, and both felt much the same kind of obligations to take action in the absence of any obvious British moves. Yet on closer examination it is evident that there were many subtle differences between the two, particularly with regard to their perceptions of the specific threat that they faced, and in terms of their attitude towards Britain and towards one-another. It was
these subtle differences that were perhaps the more significant with regard to the specific policy formulations of each Dominion.

The differing views of the Admiralty and of the two Dominions with regard to naval defence requirements in the South Pacific region stemmed from and manifested themselves in two principal areas. The first was the manner in which the two Dominions saw themselves in relation to the world outside the British Empire, and the second was in the relationship between the Admiralty and the Dominions.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, both Australia and New Zealand shared with Britain a fear of Russian aggression. British fears centred largely around Russian ambitions in the Middle East and India, but the two Dominions felt that the possibility of a Russian fleet steaming south to invade Australia, New Zealand, or both, could not be discounted.¹ The size of the naval forces that the British maintained in South Pacific waters was not great, and some concern was expressed by the Dominions as a result; the feeling grew during the 1880's that perhaps the Dominions could make some contributions towards their own naval defence.²

When the issue was discussed at the 1887 Colonial Conference, an agreement was reached by which the two Dominions would jointly provide five fast cruisers and two torpedo gunboats to form an 'Auxiliary Squadron', which would aid the Australasian Squadron in the execution of its duties. By the terms of the agreement, embodied into law in the 1887 'Australia and New Zealand Naval Defence Act',

¹ See Glyn Barratt Russophobia in New Zealand, 1838-1908 (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North 1981) for discussion. However, although well supported by documents, Barratt's analysis suffers from a number of factual errors and a perhaps undue emphasis on the degree to which New Zealanders actually feared a Russian invasion.

² See, e.g. W.F.D.Jervois The Defence of New Zealand (New Zealand Institute, Wellington 1884) p 21.
PLATE 1.

The masted cruiser HMS Calliope. Displacement: 2,770 tons. Dimensions: 235' x 44' x 21'. Armament: 4-6" BL, 12-5" BL, 2 TT. Protection: ½" armoured deck. Engines and speed: compound, 4,023 hp = 14.75 knots. (E.H.H.Archibald The Metal Fighting Ship (Blandford Press, London, 1971) p 49.) Seen here shortly after completion with short funnels, HMS Calliope was the first all-metal hulled cruiser built for the Royal Navy, and launched in 1884. In 1887 she was sent to the South Pacific where she formed a part of the Australasian Squadron until 1899. She typified the kind of vessel then being sent to those waters. (Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Ref. No. 61806½.)
the two Dominions would jointly meet the annual cost of maintaining
the additional ships, provided that this sum did not exceed 91,000
pounds, in which case the Imperial government would pay the dif­
fERENCE; and the Dominions were also expected to repay the initial
cost of constructing these vessels, plus interest at five percent,
again sharing this additional annual sum of 35,000 pounds between
themselves. Division of the total was to be calculated on a per
head of population basis, and the agreement was to remain in
force for some ten years.  

Although New Zealand's annual contribution thus came to the
nominal total of some twenty thousand pounds, the actual figure
paid, starting in the 1891-92 financial year, varied between a
minimum of 20,304 and a maximum of 21,534 pounds per annum.  

The Australian contribution hovered around the hundred thousand pound
mark. Both contributions represented significant sums in relation
to the size of the respective Dominion economies; yet the total
was very much less than that which the Admiralty had to provide
in order to maintain its Australasian Squadron, and faded almost
into insignificance by comparison with the total Estimates for the
Royal Navy, which at that time were approaching some twenty five
million pounds annually.

It is clear then that neither Dominion was fully capable of
financially supporting the kind of defence which even then both
felt to be necessary. At the time of the 1887 agreement, however,
this was not a crucial factor, since both Dominions remained happy
to leave the development of a defence policy for the region in the

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hands of the Admiralty.

The situation in which both Dominions felt themselves to be placed with regard to potential enemies outside the British Empire, however, changed quite dramatically during the first decade of the twentieth century. According to most analysts, the spectacular Japanese military successes in the Pacific against the Russians shocked both New Zealanders and Australians, both in public and in governmental circles, into the realisation that the 'Yellow Peril', which had until then been seen as a vague menace related to emigration, had become a very real and serious military menace.

It appears from documentary sources that the official realisation of the Japanese military threat came about quite suddenly. Although newspapers had been publicly voicing some concern from the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, the first official alarm was not expressed until early 1905 in a carefully worded memorandum by Vice-Admiral A.D. Fanshawe, Commander in Chief of the Australasian Squadron.

Entitled 'Australia and New Zealand's Real and Only Danger from an Enemy', Fanshawe's memorandum warned of the dangers that emanated from 'other' Pacific powers, pointing out that the only real protection either Dominion had was the 'capacity of the Royal Navy to maintain command of the Eastern seas'. Couched in terms that did not specifically state that Fanshawe, a British officer, was issuing a warning about the danger from Britain's

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7. *Ibid* pp 5-6 is informative.
8. WArc G48/F/4, Confidential Enclosure.
ally, the memorandum discussed the difficulties of mounting an invasion of Australia or New Zealand, and Fanshawe made the telling comment that

It does not, I think, appear that the difficulties confronting an army invading New Zealand (whose operations would be confined to the capture of the chief cities alone) would compare in magnitude to those successfully overcome in the present campaign in Manchuria.9

Fanshawe was also at pains to point out that Tokyo was very much closer to the Dominions than any major British naval base except Hong Kong; and he was only too well aware when making this statement that Fisher was in the process of removing the battleships from the China Squadron, thus rendering that force hardly more powerful than Fanshawe's own.10

The implication was clear; the Japanese had won quite significant victories over the Russians in difficult terrain. It would be just as easy for them to steam into the South Pacific and overwhelm the main centres of both Australia and New Zealand, particularly as the Royal Navy's 'capacity...to maintain command' of the area had just been dramatically reduced.

This document essentially encapsulated the style of alarm that was felt throughout both Dominions as a result of the Japanese victories and Fisher's simultaneous strategic re-distributions. But there were a few variations. A few days after Fanshawe's article was written, in early April 1905, the New Zealand Herald published a lengthy article in which Sir Robert Stout (who of course was un-

10. The Commander in Chief, Admiral Sir Gerard Noel, became a devout anti-Fisherite thereafter.
aware of Fanshawe's thoughts on the matter) discussed the 'Eastern Menace'. Japan was seen as the principal threat not through direct invasion but rather in terms of competition from her industrial power. Increased efficiency would be the key to the Dominions' survival. Stout also made the comment that should the Chinese adopt Japanese methods and approaches, they would pose an even worse threat than the Japanese currently did.

The article provoked the editor to remark that 'we must draw together, regardless of class, in the presence of national dangers, and those who consider the 'Yellow Peril' a national danger may well bear in mind Sir Robert Stout's remedies'.

Use of the Chinese 'threat' to illustrate the potential danger seen emanating from the Japanese was later adopted by Ward, who reiterated in 1911 that 'would anyone contend that if China were as well-equipped as Japan, there was no danger to New Zealand?'

New Zealanders evidently did not fully understand, or did not choose to fully understand, many of the reasons why Britain and Japan had chosen to make an alliance. The Herald followed Stout's article a few days later with an editorial which outlined some of the security-related pressures which had led Britain to take up the alliance. The editorial continued, however, that since the Japanese victory at Tsushima had effectively eliminated Russian sea power in the area, these pressures no longer applied and that the alliance could therefore be quite readily terminated at no loss to British interests in the region.

importance since this subtle difference was partly contributory to the differences between the defence policies of the two Dominions, when they emerged.

From the Australian point of view, the Japanese 'threat' had surfaced as early as 1901, at which time the alliance was still under negotiation, when it was feared that the signing of the alliance would free up Japanese migration to Imperial territories. While such matters were essentially the domain of foreign policy, and hence the exclusive responsibility of Britain, deep concern was nevertheless expressed in Australia because freer migration would interfere with the 'White Australia' policy of the Commonwealth government. According to one analyst, I.H. Nish, the Australian stance in fact caused some difficulties in the negotiations not only during the initial alliance discussions in 1901-02, but again during the negotiations for renewal in 1905 and 1911. The British evidently resigned themselves to the fact that the Australian attitude would always pose problems in this area, the then Prime Minister, A.J. Balfour, remarking that

I am very doubtful whether this is a subject on which we either can, or ought, to coerce our self-governing colonies, although it seems obvious that if we permit them to differentiate against the Japanese immigrant, we can raise no objection to the Japanese differentiating against the British trader, whether he comes from Australia or from England. 17

16. Ibid p 204.

17. Quoted in ibid p 205.
The military nature of the 'threat' surfaced, as in New Zealand, with the news of Japanese military successes against Russia. 'Australia must make up her mind to part forever with a past of almost absolute security', warned the *Sydney Morning Herald* as early as February 1904. The *Bulletin*, a year later, wrote of the Japanese victories at Mukden that it was to Australia that the position gave the 'gravest cause for anxiety...It would be long before Asiatic power could so grow as to threaten the territory of Europe...But Australia is a lonely outpost of the white race on the very borders of Asia'.

According to Meaney the Japanese victories in 1905 caused the Australian government to sense for the first time the 'possibility of a primary threat to their territorial integrity and national security'.

The position on both sides of the Tasman from this respect was thus quite similar, and it is perhaps not surprising that when the American Great White Fleet embarked on its 1908 world tour, partly to assert American interests in the Phillipines against possible Japanese aggression, the Prime Ministers of both Australia and New Zealand invited the American ships to visit South Pacific shores. The occasion was seen as evidence that the United States was being sought as a form of ally against the Japanese, and the implications of the visit were discussed not only by New Zealand's parliament, but also by the popular

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press on both sides of the Tasman. The *Evening Post* remarked that 'as the champions of White ascendancy in the Pacific, America... represents the ideals of Australia and New Zealand far better than Britain has hitherto been able to do'.

In Australia the *Sydney Mail* commented that 'if it ever has to come to seeking the protection of another Power our people would probably turn instinctively to Uncle Sam'.

The visit of the fleet served also to highlight the fact that Japan was not the only other Pacific power; that the Americans were also beginning to assert their presence. While relations with the United States remained cordial, the implication was clear that Australia and New Zealand had a choice between accepting Britain or the United States, and that the latter could if it so desired assert itself over the two small South Pacific nations.

The sentiments expressed during the visit of the American fleet contained perhaps the crux of the Dominions' dilemma. Both public and governmental fears identified Japan as a potential invader at worst, a source of migrants and of industrial competition at best, and in general as a nation threatening the security of the 'White Races' in the Pacific. It was a threat which had some commonality with United States fears and hence the United States, which saw its own interests in the Phillipines threatened, could be looked to for support. Yet Japan was not only allied to Britain but also formed the keystone of British maritime defence policy in the Far East. Thus the Dominions faced a problem which could not

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readily be solved by turning to Britain for help.

When it came to their other potential enemies, the Dominions faced less of a problem. Although the British did not share with the two South Pacific Dominions the view that the Japanese posed a potential threat to Imperial security in the region, the Dominions, by contrast, agreed with the British in their identification of possible European enemies.

This was essentially because the Dominions, as integral parts of the British Empire, saw threats to Britain as also representing threats to themselves. The principal fear, which Ward in particular often expressed, was of some European power successfully subjugating Britain and then proceeding to acquire her colonial possessions, against which moves the Dominions, bereft of British protection, would be helpless.

There was also the question of the interest that these other European powers had in the Pacific. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the last great scramble for colonial possessions by various European powers, and the various islands of the Pacific proved to be tempting targets. New Zealand had, under the Vogel and Seddon administrations in particular, engaged in a whole-hearted waving of the colonial banner on Britain's behalf, attempting to gain as many island territories for Britain as possible before any other power stepped in. This had in fact led to some difficulties over the issue of Samoa, which the Germans and Americans both also wanted; the New Zealanders did not fully appreciate that British policy in this respect involved careful planning designed to appease


rather than to antagonize Britain's neighbours, and as a result was somewhat taken aback when following negotiations the territory was split between Germany and the United States. German possession of Western Samoa remained something of a thorn in New Zealand's side, which perhaps explains the eagerness with which a force was despatched to take the island following the outbreak of World War One.

It seems however that from a military standpoint the possession of various islands in the Pacific by Britain's various potential European enemies was viewed as less serious than the balance of naval strength in European waters. This was particularly the case as far as the German naval threat there was concerned, and developments in this area were observed with interest and concern by those in both Australia and New Zealand.

An example of the kinds of emotion that could be elicited over this issue can be seen in the response in the New Zealand press to Ward's 1909 dreadnought offer. This was seen as a highly patriotic move by which the loyal Dominion was doing its part to bolster the Empire against the threat from the Germans. A large British navy was, according to Cecil W. Palmer, Wellington Secretary of the Navy League, all that stood between New Zealand and national annihilation. Almost universal acclaim followed the offer - even the Opposition supported the proposal, although


26. Ibid, see discussion Ch. XI & XIV. For an alternative interpretation see also Sylvia Masterman The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa, 1845-1884 (Allen & Unwin, London 1934.)

27. Evening Post, 29th March 1909.

Massey expressed the reservation that he felt Ward should have called Parliament. 29

The reconciliation of Imperial sentiment and threat perception with the local security thinking of the two Dominions was a particular problem which successive Dominion governments had to face. They were not in an enviable position, since the nation that they most feared was one against which Britain was not prepared or able to make naval dispositions. Yet the kind of resources that the two Dominions could bring to bear for their own protection were insufficient even to maintain the level of defence in the region as it existed under British strategic policy.

The solution to which both Dominions came was to a degree directed by their own perceptions of their position within the Empire. Since the late nineteenth century, the various elements of the British Empire had been moving towards a position of self-government within the Empire, essentially as the result of a deliberate policy on the part of the British. The status of self-governing Dominion had been given to Australia in 1901, when the various Australian colonies had been amalgamated into a single Commonwealth, and New Zealand had assumed Dominion status in 1907. 30

Although neither Dominion (nor, for that matter, any of the others, such as Canada) ceased to feel very much a part of the world-embracing British community, the status of self-government


30. Technically speaking both Australia and New Zealand were Colonies prior to their assuming Dominion status. For simplicity, however, they have been referred to as Dominions throughout this work, even in relation to dates when the term Colony should more correctly have been applied.
tended to amplify any sense of incipient nationalism that existed in the one-time colony. It also lent weight to the view that the Dominions should be viewed more as partners within the Empire, and that they should have a greater voice in matters such as the formulation of foreign policy, an area in which Britain still retained tight control. This view was certainly one which Ward firmly held, and indeed, which he was keen to promote.  

Against the background of an 'imperial partnership', such things as cash contributions to naval defence, which the Admiralty preferred on the basis of their assumption that the entire Empire bore a dependent relationship to Britain, were not acceptable, and a solution more amenable to this style of thinking was one where each element of the Empire contributed materially to a central, Imperial defence.

It was this difference of opinion to which a contemporary observer, Richard Jebb, attributed the failure of the 1907 Colonial Conference to come to an agreement on naval matters, and to this difference too can be attributed the origins of the style of solution to which the two Dominions came in attempting to solve their problems regarding naval defence.

It is clear from the argument to this point, then, that the factors which stimulated Australia and New Zealand in to devising naval policies of their own had effect in two ways. The first was that the Dominions' perception of Japan as a potential enemy had outlined the fact that British naval distributions were essentially being made in response to the imperatives perceived by Britain.

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31. See, e.g. 'Proceedings' p 50.
32. Richard Jebb *The Imperial Conference* (London 1911), II pp 152-53.
These were not necessarily the same as those of the Dominions. The second was that the position of the Dominions within the Empire as self-governing units had placed them also into the frame of mind where such developments as the origination of defence policies of their own were actually conceivable; they had begun to question the role of the Admiralty as sole director of Imperial defence.

Once the notion had surfaced that the Dominions, in order both to aid in their own defence and to bolster that of the Empire, should embark upon the formulation of their own naval defence policies, the question facing both Australia and New Zealand concerned the determination of the best manner in which this could be done. Resources were limited and the requirements high. It was, as is also clear from this argument, perhaps unfortunate that the Dominions identified Japan as their potential enemy. To handle the situation called for careful planning, diplomacy, and perhaps also an oblique approach to the problem. Yet they seemingly had no option but to proceed.
The first of the two South Pacific Dominions to advance concrete proposals for indigenous naval defence to the Admiralty was Australia. From their inception in 1902, Australian naval proposals were characterised by their forthright approach to the problem of providing defence for the Australian coastline, even though this rendered them of a style which did not lend itself to easy acceptance by the Admiralty.

In some respects New Zealand had powerful reasons to follow the Australian lead, and even to engage in bi-lateral co-operation over the issue. Australasian waters were seen as a single strategic unit by both the Admiralty and the two Dominions, and it would have made sense to keep them that way. New Zealand also did not possess the resources to construct and maintain a balanced local navy, and hence if this course of action was desired, co-operation with Australia would have been virtually mandatory.

But although the Australians extended the offer of co-operation on several occasions, the New Zealand government preferred to take no action until 1908. There were a number of cogent reasons for this,
as the argument of the next two chapters will make clear. Briefly, however, New Zealand did not follow the Australian lead, nor immediately innovate any policy of her own, because the pressures that influenced the timing and nature of the Australian moves were not felt with anything like the same intensity across the Tasman until some years later, and because even despite this, the ties that New Zealand felt with Australia were not so strong or as significant as those which were felt with Britain, and hence there was no great incentive to co-operate, particularly in policies which were so obviously unwelcome at the Admiralty.

The security thinking of Australia during the latter part of the nineteenth century took the approach that, while some form of locally provided naval defence was desirable, the greater burden of such defence could readily be left in the hands of the Royal Navy. The provision, consequent upon this style of thinking, of several small coast defence ships and later, of the Auxiliary Squadron, was quite acceptable to the Admiralty, which in fact expected that the Australians should take some steps towards providing an immediate defence of their harbours in this way.

But by the turn of the century, Australian thinking had altered away from the view that sufficient indigenous defence existed in obsolete coast-defence monitors such as the Cerberus and the small and obsolescent Pallas class cruisers of the Auxiliary Squadron. The sentiments expressed in the first Australian naval proposals of early 1902 represented this change in

1. Which dated back to the 1860's but which was still the only mobile defence provided for Sydney harbour as late as 1900. Oscar Parkes British Battleships 1860-1950 (Seeley Service, London 1957.) pp 166-68.
the style of Australian naval defence thinking, a change brought on as a response to the situation in which, as outlined in the previous chapter, Australia felt itself to be placed. Alerted to local defence concerns by a growing fear of the Japanese, and with a nascent sense of nationalism that the elevation to Dominion status had served to focus, yet at the same time unwilling to undermine the very real loyalties felt towards Britain, the Australians were spurred to act by the need to find a negotiating platform before the 1902 Colonial Conference, and the obvious step was to propose the construction of a local navy. In so doing, the Australians hoped to both satisfy nationalistic desires to contribute to their own defence, and to bolster the level of Imperial defences in the area, thus obviating the need for Britain to send valuable forces from elsewhere to do so.

The first of the 1902 proposals, encapsulated in a report by Captain W.R. Creswell, then Naval Commandant, Queensland, was clearly more directed towards the use of the local navy idea to satisfy the demands of a growing sense of nationalism. Creswell urged that Australia should 'take an active and personal share in her own defence'. Attempting to bolster protection merely by means of an increased naval subsidy, as had been suggested might be arranged in the forthcoming Colonial Conference, would lead only to stagnation and 'continued naval impotence for Australia'.

Calling for a new agreement to be made with Britain on the expiration of the 1887 agreement which had led to the formation of the Auxiliary Squadron, Creswell proposed that Australia should embark on the construction of an independent fleet. This, he

claimed, would enjoy a number of advantages over an Imperial squadron in the area, the main one being that the Australian officers would know local waters intimately.

Construction was to proceed in stages. The first stage would provide four new warships, these to be optimised for local conditions and to be 'typical of the class of ship required for Australian defence'. They were to be ordered at intervals of approximately eighteen months, and would be completed between 1903 and 1909, thus forming the core of Australia's new navy.

What Creswell meant by 'typical' of Australian requirements is unclear, but it is evident that he had in mind something other than any of the kinds of warship then being built in Britain. Possibly he was hoping to devise a design on a displacement which would not be so great as to increase cost above that which might be paid for an existing design; cost worried him and this was one reason why the rate of procurement had to be so low.

Exactly what Creswell wanted was never specified, however, because his proposals did not come to fruition. Shortly after Creswell submitted his memorandum, the then Minister of Defence, Sir John Forrest, presented a minute to the then Prime Minister, Sir Edmund Barton, which although suggesting that Australian naval development should take place, attempted to place such development in the context of financial reality and also Australia's Imperial ties.

Forrest's proposal suggested that the Federal government could best address the problems of naval defence that faced both Australia and the British Empire as a whole by supplying

3. Ibid p 110.
eight cruisers of the *Highflyer* class to supplement the imperial squadron. Six of these new cruisers would be in commission at any one time. The provision of these ships represented the limits of what Australia could realistically do since her financial position was such that it was 'beyond the power of the Commonwealth... to create a force adequate for the naval defence of Australia... the cost of the annual maintenance of the *Royal Arthur* alone is more than our whole contribution'.

To construct an entirely independent navy was, in any case, undesirable because of Australia's imperial connections and the fact that her interests in the area were 'as one' with those of Britain. Forrest therefore felt that his naval proposal should be seen as an example of the loyal Dominion making a contribution to the defence of the Empire. There was no question but that the proposed cruisers would become a part of the Australasian Squadron in wartime.

Although more limited than Creswell's proposal, Forrest's ideas represented nevertheless a change away from the old concepts in that, while to a degree what he intended was merely an extension of the old Auxiliary squadron, the size and power of the forces that he now proposed was sufficient to virtually double the strength of the imperial forces in Australasian waters. The cruisers would also give Australia a measure of local naval power which was by no means insignificant. This was particularly so in view of the homogenous nature of Forrest's intended developments; the ships so procured, being identical, could be manoeuvred and fought together as a unit, if necessary, giving them advantages not possessed by squadrons comprised of many different and often not fully compatible kinds of warship. The qualitative improvement in

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5. *Ibid* p 115-16.
the vessels that Forrest proposed, over those of the Auxiliary Squadron which had earlier been considered adequate, is clear from the following tabular summary of their principal features.

### TABLE 3.1

**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS**

**PALLAS AND HIGHFLYER CLASSES.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pallas</th>
<th>Highflyer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Designed</strong></td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Displacement</strong></td>
<td>2,575 tons</td>
<td>5,600 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed</strong></td>
<td>16 knots*</td>
<td>20 knots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td>265 x 41 x 17'</td>
<td>350 x 54 x 22'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armament</strong></td>
<td>8-4.7', 8-3 pdrs, 4 Nord-</td>
<td>11-6&quot;, 9-12 pdrs, 6-3 pdrs, 2-18&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enfeldts, 4-14&quot; TT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armour</strong></td>
<td>2½&quot; deck.</td>
<td>5&quot; engine hatches, 6&quot; conning tower, 3-2&quot; deck.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*19 knots at forced draught.

The eight proposed *Highflyers* were felt by Forrest to be 'adequate for the naval defence of Australia at the present time'.

However, when the proposals were raised at the 1902 Colonial Conference, they met with a chilly reception. The basic objection, as raised by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Tweedmouth, was that while minor harbour defence forces could acceptably be administered by individual governments, what the Australians now proposed was a significantly greater force, large enough to introduce a marked change in the level of imperial naval forces in the region.

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Although such a force could come under British control in wartime, its independence in peacetime was unacceptable for two reasons. The first was that a force the size of the proposed Australian squadron could not be quickly integrated into British command structures on the outbreak of war. Yet current British thinking saw any naval war as being decided by events that would take place very soon after the outbreak of hostilities. In the case of the surprise cruiser raids envisaged by the Admiralty as being mounted against the two South Pacific Dominions, the inability of the two forces to rapidly integrate would mean that they would remain for all practical purposes separate units during the critical period immediately after the outbreak of any war.

The second difficulty raised by the Admiralty was that they held the sole responsibility for the defence of the Empire in both peace and war. They were therefore reluctant to allow another power within the Empire to control at any time forces which, from the strategic point of view, were useful. As Tweedmouth said at the time, 'there must be only one authority with full power and responsibility to the Empire to move the ships...to concentrate them where they can deal the most effective blow against the forces of the enemy'.

As far as the Admiralty were concerned, then, the Australian proposal did not represent a valid means of strengthening imperial defences in the South Pacific at all. It represented instead an attempt by the Commonwealth government to usurp the traditional role of the Admiralty in ensuring the adequate defence of the Empire, and the proposal would also, if it was put into action, threaten the

strategic unity of the area. For these reasons the Admiralty had no choice but to turn the Australians down.

But negotiations did not prove to be entirely fruitless. The Australians had made their point that they felt the naval strength of the South Pacific to be insufficient, and the Admiralty agreed to increase the power of the Australasian Squadron. An armoured cruiser, two additional second-class cruiser, and four additional third-class cruisers, as well as four sloops, were despatched to reinforce the squadron. Two of these vessels were stationed permanently in New Zealand harbours, the remainder being based in Australian ports. More frequent exercises were also to be carried out. To compensate for the additional cost, the annual subsidies of the two Dominions were also increased, to two hundred thousand pounds in the case of Australia, and to forty thousand pounds in the case of New Zealand. In consequence of these changes, the 'Australia and New Zealand Defence Act 1903' was passed in New Zealand, authorising the additional money, the first payment of which was made in the 1904-05 financial year.

The qualitative improvement in the squadron can be gauged from a comparison of the flagships assigned to it before and after the changes, as given in Table 3.2 on the following page.

This increase to the Australasian Squadron evidently satisfied any immediate Australian desires for additional naval protection, for they did not renew their proposals for the construction of an independent local navy until 1905, in which year the Japanese successes against the Russians brought home

10. CD 4948 'Conference with the Representatives of the Self-Governing Dominions on the Naval and Military Defence of the Empire' p 26. Hereafter referred to as CD 4948 'Conference'.
### TABLE 3.2

**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS**

**ROYAL ARTHUR AND POWERFUL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Royal Arthur</th>
<th>Powerful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Designed</strong></td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Displacement</strong></td>
<td>7,700 tons</td>
<td>14,200 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed</strong></td>
<td>18½ knots*</td>
<td>22 knots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td>360 x 60 x 26'</td>
<td>520 x 71 x 30'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armament</strong></td>
<td>1-9.2&quot;, 12-6&quot;, 12-6 pdrs, 2-18&quot; TT.</td>
<td>2-9.2&quot;, 16-6&quot;, 12-3 pdrs, 4-18&quot; TT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armour</strong></td>
<td>6&quot; casemates, 12&quot; conning tower, 5&quot; deck.</td>
<td>6&quot; barbettes, turrets &amp; casemates, 12&quot; conning tower, 6&quot; deck.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*19½ knots at forced draught.

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the realisation that the Japanese might well pose a military threat to the two South Pacific Dominions.

This time, the Australian naval proposals took a much more developed form, and Creswell, now Director of Naval Forces, forwarded a memorandum in late 1905 to the CID, proposing not merely a coast-defence squadron but a complete separate navy for the Commonwealth. This navy was to be constructed over a period of seven years at a cost of some 2,300,000 pounds. It was to consist of three 'cruiser destroyers', sixteen torpedo boat destroyers, and fifteen torpedo boats. Its role was not to act against hostile fleets or squadrons, which Creswell now claimed

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13. What these were is unclear. The CID minuted that they were destroyers of cruiser-like size, but it appears likely in view of their naming in context with 'torpedo-boat-destroyers' and in context with their intended operations that Creswell intended the term to mean 'vessels which can destroy cruisers'. CD 3524 'Papers Laid Before the Imperial Conference, 1907' p 48, Document 1 'Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Question of a General Scheme of Defence for Australia - May 1906'. Hereafter referred to as CD 3524 'Papers', Document 1, 'CID Report'.

PLATE 2

The armoured cruiser HMS *Powerful*, flagship of the Australasian Squadron from 1903 until the squadron was disbanded in 1913. The largest of all of Sir William White's cruiser designs, she and her sister ship *Terrible* (which served in Chinese and South African waters) were optimised for speed, range and habitability, the only criticism being that they were seriously under-armed and under-armoured for their size, which in terms of displacement approached that of contemporary battleships. For statistics see Table 3.2. (Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Ref. No. 80887½.)
to be the province of the imperial fleet, but was instead to act 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 response of the CID was cool. In an answering paper of May 1906, subsequently laid before the Commonwealth parliament, the CID argued on the basis of existing British naval distributions that the 'attacks on floating trade' against which Creswell wanted to build a defence would 'offer to the enemy but slight prospect of any but very transitory success'. The benefits of Creswell's proposal were therefore felt to be 'altogether incommensurate with the expenditure that would be entailed by their maintenance'. In any case, trade defence of the kind envisaged by Creswell for a local Australian navy to perform would be carried out by squadrons of the Royal Navy.

In the opinion of the CID, the only real threat that presented any danger to Australia, and which existing British naval distributions in the area were therefore designed to counter, was that of raids by 'single vessels or small squadrons'. A successful invasion by greater forces 'aiming at a prolonged or permanent occupation of Australian territory' could be

15. I have utilised the full document as reproduced in ibid rather than the edited version in D.A. pp 132-37.
18. Ibid p 40. This view was also applied to New Zealand, see WArc G48/34 'Defence Scheme of New Zealand 1906' p 13 where it was argued that attacks against New Zealand would be by 'at most, two or three cruisers' landing no more than four hundred men.
achieved only by a nation which had complete command of the sea, due to the fact that Australia, as an island, was accessible only from the sea. Since command of the sea currently rested in the hands of the British, and since their naval policy was directed towards ensuring their retention of this command, it was clear that any attempt to invade Australia with significant forces would be doomed to failure. This fact was well known and thus any nation likely to wish to invade would be deterred from actually doing so.  

According to the reasoning of the CID, then, there was no need for the Australians to build naval forces of their own, as their defence was ensured, in the case of almost any conceivable eventuality, by the power of the Royal Navy.

This conclusion was not received well in Australia, where a Committee was set up under Creswell to consider both the reply of the CID and the general naval defence requirements of Australia.

The report of this Committee was presented to the Commonwealth Parliament in September 1906. According to this report, the CID had not been justified in making its claims. Local naval forces were required to allow the British to concentrate their own forces in Home waters without having to worry about the security of the Dominions; to permit the more efficient interception and destruction of raiding cruisers; and to protect Australia in case of the Australasian Squadron being absent.

These local naval forces, the report continued, would best


be comprised of destroyers, these vessels having a number of advantages including their ability to provide an effective substitute for the Australasian Squadron should it be absent; to prevent blockades; to deter night attacks; to force hostile cruisers to retreat; to keep in touch with the enemy; to enhance communications; to deter landing operations; and to enforce a 'continual night watchfulness on an enemy to a degree that could not be endured for any length of time'. The cost of such a force annually, including both maintenance and capital repayments based on the renewal of the vessels every ten years, was calculated to be some 395,000 pounds. Creswell himself hoped that this 'torpedo defence' would become the means of initiating a policy whereby the Australian government would gradually create a major sea-force of its own.

The report also briefly remarked on the fact that, since Australia depended for her security on military equipment that was manufactured in Britain, and that the supply lines might well be cut in wartime, it was only logical to propose also that Australia should equip herself also with the means to produce all her own wartime needs. India had, the report noted, already embarked upon this course of action. This point was taken up by Creswell in early 1907, when he commented in a further memorandum that should the supply lines back to Britain be broken, resistance would fail with the expenditure of the ammunition. 'The initiation of a naval service should be the

22. Ibid p 54.
starting point of a policy to remedy this weakness,' wrote Creswell 'An axiom of our defence should be the production in Australia of every war requisite'.

Clearly Australian security thinking had by early 1907 developed to a point that was, in terms of the creation and maintenance of an independent naval force, considerably beyond the position that it had occupied five years before, when all that had been contemplated had been a significant extension of the forces designed to merely supplement the existing imperial squadron. Now, the intention was to provide the means by which a small local navy could be constructed and also by which it could be maintained in wartime. A good deal of what was being contemplated in 1907 can be traced back to the influence of Creswell, who as observed had since 1902 been pushing for a completely independent Australian naval force; but one cannot also disregard the effect of external events and particularly the realisation of the true military potential of the Japanese, which had been a major concern since 1905.

It is also clear that these Australian ideas were not held in high favour by those in Britain; not only the Admiralty but also the CID were opposed to them, and the Australians had no reason to suppose that their further proposals for engaging in some form of local naval development would not also meet with the same negative response. Knowledge of this position did not, however, deter the Australians from bringing their ideas up at the Colonial Conference of 1907, under the aegis of their general proposal that the provisions of the 1902 Naval Defence Agreement

should be reconsidered.  

Perhaps in order to ease the situation faced by the Admiralty with regard to Australia, Tweedmouth was publicly conciliatory. He had been informed privately by Alfred Deakin, Australia's Prime Minister and representative at the Conference, that the people of Australia viewed the 200,000 pound annual naval subsidy was something of a 'tribute' and during the conference discussion of naval defence agreed that the Australians might, as they had proposed, build a small fleet of ships to supplement British forces in the area. But Tweedmouth also made clear that in his opinion the Dominions could best support naval defence by the provision of such things as docks and coaling facilities, and he again emphasised the need for unity, that there should be 'one sea, one Empire, and...one Navy'.

The real issue, Tweedmouth argued, was over control of the ships. As far as the Admiralty were concerned, it was necessary for them to have full control over all imperial ships at all times if they were to fulfil their duty of defending the Empire against its potential enemies.

Tweedmouth expressed the desire of the Admiralty and His Majesty's Government to meet with the delegates and to come to some mutual arrangement concerning naval defence; however, no time-table had been set when the various delegates left London,

26. CD 3524 'Papers' p 38.
29. CD 3523 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1907' p 134. Hereafter referred to as CD 3523 'Minutes'.
30. Ibid p 129.
and Deakin in fact evidently went away under the impression that the conciliatory words of Tweedmouth during the general discussion had represented a tacit support of Australia's position. On October 16th, Deakin communicated with Lord Northcote, the Governor General, to the effect that 'in order to unite with the mother country for defence purposes', he proposed to offer a thousand seamen to Britain and that two 'P' class cruisers or better, along with four hundred of the seamen, be kept in Australian waters under Commonwealth control, in lieu of the existing subsidy.31

This proposal represented in essence a return to the style of the offers that Australia had made in 1902, largely it would seem because Deakin felt that this was something which the Admiralty might now find acceptable. As indicated by their renewed request in March 1909 for permission to build a destroyer-based local fleet, Australian security thinking generally had undergone no actual reversion.32

The initial Admiralty response to Deakin's new suggestions, on December 7th, was to reject them entirely. Substitution of men for the subsidy was not acceptable, and the Board 'while anxious to meet the wishes of Mr Deakin and his colleagues as much as possible' was not prepared to alter the stance that had been taken at the Conference, and nor were they prepared to increase their expenditure in Australasian waters as implied by the withdrawal of the Australian portion of the subsidy. Some concern was also expressed by the Admiralty as to whether the Australians

31. WArc G2/17 Dominions No.5, 'Correspondence Relating to the Imperial Conference' pp 136-37. Hereafter referred to as 'Dominions No. 5'.

meant by their request that the existing naval agreement should be modified, or whether it should be cancelled. 33

This refusal evoked considerable surprise from Deakin, who explained in a speech to the House of Representatives, a few days after receiving the Admiralty reply, that he had been convinced from his discussions in London that the Admiralty had agreed to the concept of independent naval development for Australia. He warned that it would be 'dangerous for the Admiralty to insist upon a supremacy which, if mis-adventure befell, would place the whole responsibility upon them'. 34 Andrew Fisher, Opposition leader, 35 was in full accord with the Prime Minister on this matter. 36

The proposal was therefore presented once more. This time the Admiralty found themselves also facing pressure to accept the proposals from the Colonial Office, which viewed the continuing Admiralty refusal as an interference in the official British policy of allowing the Dominions control over their own internal policies, which the Colonial Office felt that the naval proposals represented.

To this pressure the Admiralty was reluctantly forced to bow, and in February 1908 agreed to accept the Australian plans.

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33. CD 4325 'Correspondence Relating to the Naval Defence of Australia and New Zealand' p 5. Hereafter referred to as CD 4325 'Correspondence'.

34. 'Dominions No. 5', p 143.


36. D.A. p 160. This was not, it will be observed, the only instance where the various political parties in both Dominions presented a unified front on defence matters.
However, they indicated that they could not appropriate four 'P' class cruisers at the present time, and that special arrangements would have to be made for the transitional period. There was also, the Board pointed out, a problem relating to international law. The only executive power legally recognised internationally in the Empire was Britain. Australian ships, therefore, if used outside her territorial waters for the promotion of any Australian policies, could legally be considered to be pirates. Alternatively, if Britain took responsibility, the government might find itself in the position where it had to justify and pay for the actions of another government. This was clearly not acceptable and it was therefore absolutely essential that, once the Australians had established their naval force, the vessels of which it was comprised should come under the control of the local Commander in Chief of British naval forces, if it was necessary to move them outside Australian territorial waters.

The Admiralty also expressed the desire that the Australians should confer with the New Zealand government before embarking on any course of action, since whatever the Australians did would intimately affect the defence position of the latter Dominion. 37

It is evident that the Admiralty were greatly displeased at having to agree to the Australian requests, and once having given their acceptance, with associated objections, of the proposals, they did not take any further initiatives and indeed by delaying their replies to the Australian correspondence for as long as was possible, attempted to introduce the longest delay that they could before actually having to take action.

37. 'Dominions No. 5' p 174.
Thus it was that when at the beginning of April, Northcote telegraphed the Secretary of State in order to learn from the Admiralty the period for which the new naval agreement had been approved, the Admiralty did not reply until the end of May, at which time they merely tossed the onus back to the Australians, pointing out that it was up to them to propose terms and durations.\(^\text{38}\) A letter following up this exchange of telegrams, on which the Australians were evidently waiting before taking further action, was not sent until the end of August, and this merely repeated the Admiralty's earlier objections to the scheme.\(^\text{39}\)

These long delays and the general antipathy of the Admiralty finally provoked a move by the Colonial Office, which in September took the Admiralty to task for its stand regarding the need to transfer control from Australian to British hands should the ships leave Australian territorial waters. This claim was, according to the Colonial Office, on somewhat shaky legal grounds since the commissions issued by the Australian Governor General, as a representative of the King, would in fact hold up under international law. To actually convince the Commonwealth government that they were wrong in this instance might require the intervention of the Privy Council.\(^\text{40}\) The Admiralty replied that they intended taking the matter up with their own legal advisors.\(^\text{41}\)

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38. Ibid pp 175-78.
39. CD 4325 'Correspondence' p 47-49.
40. Ibid p 69.
41. Ibid.
This exchange effectively ended the negotiations over the Australian naval plans of 1908, and in the event no further steps were taken towards their execution, the delays imposed by the Admiralty being such that (as the Board may well have hoped from the outset) events overtook the scheme and it was quietly abandoned by the Australians in favour of a reversion to their 1906-07 proposals for a small destroyer based force.

It is evident from the development of Australian naval defence plans during the 1902-08 period that a considerable alteration in emphasis had been made. The notion of an independent Australian navy such as that forwarded by Creswell in 1902 had not been entirely acceptable to the Australian government at that time, and had been replaced by Forrest's idea of improving the level of reinforcement provided by Australia for the Australasian Squadron. But after 1905, when the Japanese threat assumed a military proportion, Creswell's ideas gained acceptance in governmental circles within Australia to the point where a measure even of self sufficiency in the form of indigenous Australian munitions production was seriously considered.

The reversion by Deakin in 1907-08 to planning which reflected the style of Forrest's 1902 naval reinforcement ideas can be seen as a development forced by the continuing Admiralty refusal to accept plans for an independent Australian navy; and when it became clear that the Admiralty were reluctant to accept even Deakin's reduced proposals, but that the Colonial Office had stepped in on the side of the Australians, the latter felt justified in renewing their earlier requests.

Although it would be true to say that the desire to have a local Australian navy reflected a form of nationalism, this being particularly clear in the case of Creswell's proposals
(from which, indeed, one gains the impression that Creswell himself
did not particularly like the British or their attitude), to then
assume from this that the aim was to develop Australian naval
power for the purpose of reinforcing the position of Australia as
a separate nation state is perhaps unjustified. As Deakin had
made clear, by providing the defence of their own waters, the
Australians were also relieving Britain of the need to provide
such defence, and thus directly improving the overall level of
imperial defence by allowing British vessels to be stationed
elsewhere. The nationalistic elements of the Australian naval
proposals can thus be seen more as a means by which the Aust­
ralians intended to assert their own country as a self-governing
unit within the greater overall framework of the Empire, and to
protect both this country and the Empire as a whole from a threat
that the British evidently did not appreciate, rather than as a
means of asserting Australian independence from the Empire. To
create and then widen a rift between Australia and Britain was
not the intention of their naval proposals at all.
The naval defence policies of New Zealand, by contrast with those of Australia, did not reach a level of concrete expression until 1908. The general form of this policy expression was guided by a background network of factors which related to New Zealand's financial position, political organisation, and threat perceptions, as well as to the ideological framework around which New Zealand's chief policy-maker, Ward, based his thinking. Specific policy developments were guided in timing and nature by external events, these providing the force by which the underlying concepts and ideas were given relevant form.

Some of the ideas on which Ward later based his concepts of naval defence were first aired by him at the 1907 Colonial Conference. Here he spoke at some length on the prospects of imperial co-operation. What he wanted was the formation of an imperial federation, whereby all the Dominions and Colonies would share with Britain in the governing of the Empire as a whole. The first move in this direction, he suggested, would
be the formation of an 'Imperial Council' which would represent the Dominions and Colonies as well as Britain, and which would be advisory to the imperial government on all imperial matters. One of the advantages of this, according to Ward, was that the defence burden could be shared more equally across the Empire. The proposal was turned down, but Ward applied the ideas to his defence thinking, expressing them in sentiments such as that with which he justified his 1909 dreadnought offer, when he remarked that 'we should get ready as a combination of the great Old Country with the Oversea [sic] Dominions to show the outside world that it is no use trying to get up alongside the British Navy in the matter of ship-building programmes'.

The idea that Ward was at least partially motivated by a consistent series of concepts is something which seems not to correlate with some of the observed facts about his character and nature, and about that of his government. 'Indiarubber exactly resembles the Ward government', wrote one critic, A.R. Barclay, in 1909. Ward's evident inconsistency and lack of decision has also been noted by historians. However, the evidence for this supposed 'spinelessness' relates essentially to Ward's handling of New Zealand's internal problems, and as pointed out by Keith Sinclair, his position when he assumed power in 1906 was not enviable. The 'rise of vociferous sectional opinion' threat-

ened to pull the government apart and Ward had 'little room for manoeuvre... everything seemed to be going against the Liberals'.

In view of the fact that Ward faced problems which 'perhaps... were insoluble', and that he was doing so in the wake of the powerful Seddon administration, his evident failure to develop a consistent internal policy is perhaps explicable. Faced with a multiplicity of problems and with conflicting demands he did what he could, this of necessity dictating a number of policy changes over a short period of time.

That Ward could hold firm to a single series of concepts with regard to New Zealand's imperial defence is thus not a claim which the evidence of his turgid internal policies renders invalid; and indeed, as will be seen, the documentary evidence of his speeches and discussions regarding imperial defence during his period as Prime Minister certain provides substantial proof that his thinking in this area remained consistent.

It is not in fact inconceivable that Ward utilised his approach towards imperial defence and imperial co-operation in general as a means of drawing attention away from his disastrous handling of New Zealand's internal problems. Such spectacular moves as the 1909 dreadnought offer seized and held public attention in a manner which no other action could have even approached. These actions also increased Ward's popularity by


7. Ibid.

8. The evidence in this respect is quite complete. Studies of Ward are generally hampered by the fact that his family burned almost all of his private papers on his death in 1930. Fortunately as regards his defence thinking, while he may well have had his own private thoughts of which there is now no record, he also made quite public his major reasons for taking the actions that he did.
PLATE 3.
A rare photograph of Ward in a pensive pose, taken circa 1909.
(Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, Ref. No. 185B).
playing upon the then prevalent feelings in New Zealand of what has been called 'jingo-patriotism', by which any move to uphold the Empire and its associated ideals was welcomed with a vigorous show of public support.9

Ward can hardly have been unaware of the effect that his actions had in this respect. Indeed, to a certain extent, Ward's ideas concerning defence reflected contemporary patterns of thought, being an extension of the concept of the 'self-governing Dominion', and thus promoting a form of nationalism within the greater overall framework of the Empire which was similar in many respects to that which had characterised some of the Australian defence proposals.

But there was no question of co-operation with the Australians. The promotion of New Zealand as a unit within the Empire effectively precluded this; and also, as F.L.W. Wood pointed out, while the benefits of a combined defence with Australia had been recognised since the 1880's, there was also evidently some concern expressed in New Zealand that too high a level of local Australasian defence might weaken the all-important links with Britain: 10 and these links were greatly prized. When New Zealand looked beyond her own shores, she looked first to the mother country for aid, support, and guidance, seeing in the ties with Britain a familiarity and security that could not be found elsewhere.11

It is in sentiments of this kind that a part of the explan-

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11. See Gibbons, esp. p 313.
ation can be found for New Zealand's lack of naval defence policy development between the emergence in New Zealand's security thinking of the Japanese threat in 1905, and the first expressions of defence policy in 1908. These sentiments also had their place in guiding the eventual formulation of New Zealand's policy. A further element contributing to the delay can be found also in the fact that Ward was thoroughly embroiled during that period in local issues, of which the fears of the Japanese represented but one.

But by far the overriding problem facing New Zealand during the 1905-08 period when it came to the development of local defence policies was that the finance to support even the most limited of proposals simply was not available. While the expanding frozen meat trade and burgeoning dairy industries had combined to pull the economy out of the 'long depression' in which it had languished during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the improvement was not so radical as to be able to provide adequate finance for meeting the costs of any major defence project without seriously compromising the government's ability to meet their other requirements - and this at a time when the government was hard pressed to meet the financial pressure under which it was placed in any case.

Ward summarised the position neatly at the 1907 Colonial Conference. New Zealand was a frontier society with minimal population and expensive public works schemes. It was simply not

possible from a practical standpoint to provide more than the existing forty thousand pound cash contribution. Any increase in the subsidy would, Ward argued, have to be made up for in kind rather than in cash; men, docks and coal could readily be made available for this purpose. 13

Given these sentiments, one would hardly expect that New Zealand's first policy initiative would revolve around the provision of additional money; yet this turned out to be precisely what happened. In March 1908, Ward suddenly announced that the New Zealand naval subsidy would be increased from forty to one hundred thousand pounds per annum. This one hundred and fifty percent increase would not, he added, be accompanied by any conditions as to the location of Royal Navy ships in New Zealand waters. 14

The offer was gratefully accepted by the Admiralty, and has been seen by both contemporaries and by historians as a patriotic gesture on Ward's part, and an example of New Zealand's desire to maintain imperial solidarity. Ward himself later claimed that he had made the increase in order to improve the level of naval defence that the Admiralty could provide for the Empire as a whole. 15 This of course conformed to his ideas regarding the part that the Dominions should play in the provision of imperial defence.

But the reason why Ward so suddenly announced the increase, an increase which he had only eight months before been adamant that

13. CD 3523 'Minutes' p 134-36.
his Dominion could not afford, was never made clear. It would in fact seem that he intended to address several issues, the main one being that if the latest Australian proposals - which, it will be recalled, the Admiralty was being pushed to accept - were in fact successful, then there would very likely be a reduction in the level of imperial forces in Australasian waters, which would either leave New Zealand defenceless or force them to co-operate with the Australians. Neither alternative was desirable.

Ward had been fully informed of the exchanges between the Australians and the Admiralty by the Colonial Office, and he knew that the Admiralty felt that the Australian proposals might be more acceptable if the co-operation of New Zealand could be gained. 16 By increasing the subsidy, then, Ward was not only indicating his opposition to the Australian proposals, but he was also indicating what he felt to be the most acceptable answer to the problem of defence; and by making the increase a relatively large one - something which all those involved knew that New Zealand could ill afford - he was effectively underlining his assertions in a manner that no amount of mere verbiage could have achieved.

Since this increase was also, by contrast with the Australian proposals, the kind of thing which the Admiralty had indicated that it wanted, then it served also to improve New Zealand's standing with the Board; the Admiralty's approach to New Zealand subsequently stood out in sharp contrast from that towards Australia. For instance, when later in the year Ward asked the Admiralty for a training vessel to use in producing his Dominion's

16. CD 4325 'Correspondence' p 40.
manpower contribution, the Admiralty reply was both prompt and helpful. According to the Admiralty, no wooden ships were left and the best that they could offer was an old Apollo class cruiser. This they would be happy to give, but in all fairness to New Zealand they felt it would be better if the government looked to the Merchant Marine, as vessels more suitable for training purposes could be found there. All possible help to New Zealand in this matter was promised.

The increase also was something which appealed to the 'jingo-patriotism' of New Zealand, a factor which was of some significance in view of the fact that 1908 was an election year in the Dominion; and while the effect of the increase was probably not decisive in contributing to the victory of the Liberal Party, one cannot entirely discount the fact that Ward, knowing the likely effect that his offer would have on public opinion in New Zealand, hoped to gain some electoral advantage from it.

Ward's offer in March 1909 to pay for a dreadnought, and a second if necessary, represented a further step in his approach to defence and was the result both of the general factors discussed earlier and a number of more immediate pressures which developed during early 1909. The latter were triggered by a naval crisis in Britain.

This crisis had exploded in Britain in early 1909 and, coming hard on the heels of the Fisher-Beresford feud that had threatened to rip the Navy in two, swiftly generated a mood of

17. WArc G2/17 'Dominions No.7' p 70. (Hereafter referred to as Dominions No. 7). It is ironic to note that the Apollos were successors to the Pallas class; and that while in 1909 the Admiralty were prepared to supply one of the former for training purposes, if nothing better could be found elsewhere, they three years later only grudgingly supplied two of the latter as the main direct defence of New Zealand.
panic. Successive Liberal governments had cut back on new construction to the point where critics feared the Germans were about to overtake. Panic spread and the threat to British naval supremacy posed by the Germans was quickly exaggerated out of all proportion. Fisher was not overly concerned but did not attempt to quell the agitation as the Navy stood to gain two and possibly four dreadnoughts over and above the government's stated minimum. The crisis was observed with some concern by the Dominions.

When on March 22nd Ward made the dreadnought offer, and when this was gratefully accepted by Asquith, further debate in Britain followed, with the British Conservative opposition now claiming that the British government would use the offer to replace one of the four ships already authorised, rather than as the addition Ward intended. Asquith was accused of 'fencing' with the offer, and later the Conservative member for Gravesend, Sir Gilbert Parker, declared that Asquith's reply to Ward's offer had contained the same elements of quibble that Asquith's government had shown in relation to the four extra dreadnoughts that the Conservatives wanted. Asquith in fact saw the ship as an addition; and when a month later the naval crisis was resolved by the agreement that the four additional dreadnoughts would be built, the inclusion of the offer meant that the British were committed to building nine such ships that year.

18. See Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, I
The assessment of Ward's offer by most analysts of the period has taken the view that he was motivated essentially by patriotism generated by the crisis, and that his haste in making the offer— he did not even wait to call Parliament or Cabinet—represented his garrulousness in, as Meaney put it, rushing 'impulsively to the aid of 'the Empire in danger'.'21

But on closer analysis it seems that this interpretation is not entirely correct. Patriotic motives certainly had their place, but many of Ward's actions represented fairly careful planning and were the result of due consideration of their possible effects, although it is also true that to some extent he took advantage of circumstance.

The workings of circumstance can be seen in the specific timing of the offer, which was largely the result of a different set of factors than those spurring Ward to make the offer itself.

Ward never gave an explanation of his haste which seemed to be wholly satisfactory. He told the House that 'prompt action was absolutely desirable—was, indeed, essential—if the moral effect which we had in view was to be secured'.22 But exactly what he meant by 'moral effect' was unclear. The implication that it was to bolster British confidence, which Ward's fellow parliamentarians read into his statement, was patently absurd to them since the crisis to which Ward's offer was evidently responding continued to rage for more than a month afterwards.

Consequently, although Ward received the unanimous approval of both Cabinet and Parliament, the fact that he had not called either at the outset was brought up by the Opposition with the


periodicity of a tolling bell every time the offer was discussed thereafter. 23 Indeed, Massey was still referring to it as late as 1913. 24 The criticism that Ward received for his action seems altogether out of proportion to what he might have hoped to gain had he been concerned only with the effect of the offer in Britain. Yet it is clear also that Ward seriously felt his actions to be justified; he later told the Governor-General that had he not received the approval of both Cabinet and Parliament, he would immediately have resigned, along with the government. 25

During April, Ward offered a further reason for his haste, hinting in his public speeches that he had been in possession of 'confidential information relating to the pressing danger of the situation'. 26 This was, much to his embarrassment, revealed as bluff when the general correspondence pertaining to the offer was published in Australia and cabled to New Zealand. No hint was contained in the exchanges which revealed any anxiety on the part of the British. The Opposition of course took this further opportunity to capitalise on the issue; the Governor-General referred to Ward's action in this instance as an 'error in tactics'. 27

It is evident that Ward was attempting to obscure the actual reasons for his hasty action. To some degree it is arguable that

24. WArc N1/22/6/9, paper entitled Naval Defence, statement by Massey.
25. WArc CO 209/270, Governor-General's Secret Quarterly Report, May 1909, p 2. One cannot discount the possibility that Ward in this instance was dramatising the situation.
27. Ibid p 2.
he was drawing attention away from the fact that, having made the offer personally, a greater share of the public acclaim was thus directed towards him. This undoubtedly represented a part of his desire for haste. But it appears also that he was spurred on by events across the Tasman.

In the middle of March 1909, the annual meeting of the Commonwealth state leaders took place in Sydney, and on the 18th the Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, remarked that Australia and Canada could best help British defence by offering to pay for a dreadnought each, as an indication that the 'comparatively rich young Dominions' would be prepared to help the mother country.28 The comment drew considerable attention in the English press, and was also observed with interest in New Zealand.29 Ward made his offer only four days later, on the following Sunday.

It seems clear that Ward's hand was forced by the possibility of an Australian offer. The 'moral effect' he wanted was indeed to gain gratitude from Britain, and to demonstrate the loyally patriotic views of both himself and of New Zealand. But the effect of this would be nullified if the Australians made the offer first, particularly as they had until only a few months before been at loggerheads with the Admiralty over the issue of an independent navy. Ward, who evidently hoped to elicit defence for New Zealand from Britain by means of charming rather than by issuing a series of demands, could not allow this to happen.

In terms of the actual offer itself, it seems clear that Ward had been thinking along the lines of offering some concrete form of support for some time. The chance that the Australians


might offer a dreadnought served simply to clarify his thoughts and spurred him to immediately make such an offer himself. As he explained to the Governor-General, Plunkett, in May, he had for some time been thinking that the cash subsidy was not entirely adequate, that New Zealanders

would take much greater pride and interest in knowing that H.M.S. "So-and-so" and H.M.S. "Something-else" were their ships and a visible tangible object lesson of their Dominion's part in the Empire's defence than in merely paying 100,000 a year in ignorance as to how the money was spent.  

He added that he intended at the forthcoming Imperial Conference to urge the adoption of a broad policy by which the subsidies would be replaced by gifts of ships. Somewhat to Plunkett's alarm, he also indicated that he intended 'going for the two ships'; the Governor-General felt that such a gesture would overly strain New Zealand's finances, and that the speed of warship development was such that the vessels would probably be obsolete before they had been paid for. A much more practical approach was to offer a single ship and pay for it much more quickly. Plunkett's arguments evidently prevailed because at the Conference Ward did not extend his offer of a second vessel.

The other major reasons for Ward making the offer were revealed at the Imperial Conference. He indicated here that the offer was to demonstrate Imperial solidarity, adding that 'we think it is in the best interests of the Empire that we should

31. Ibid.
remain attached to the British navy'. 32 The Germans were the immediate target of his idea of reinforcing the Royal Navy. Strengthening the British forces in the North Sea strengthened also New Zealand's defences, since the North Sea represented the 'front line' of the Empire against its primary enemy. Defeat there would mean defeat too for the Dominions; and even two or three dreadnoughts in the Pacific would not alter matters if the victorious German fleet emerged to attack them. 33

Ward's line of argument here can perhaps be criticised since he did not take into account the fact that dreadnoughts in the Pacific, given a few weeks' notice, could be re-deployed to any European trouble-spot. However, as already noted, naval thinking at the time placed emphasis on 'instant' readiness for a war which could be decided within a few days. Peacetime deployment was thus all-important, and peacetime strengths in particular areas were generally seen as being the wartime strengths in those areas.

The reinforcement of the Royal Navy would also, as Ward told the assembled delegates,

be best for us in the days to come,
when the Eastern races are a trouble to Australia and to my own country, and when a great Power in the East, now happily attached to England...may be detached from it. 34

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33. Ibid p 50.
34. Ibid p 47.
Clearly Ward felt that while the Japanese 'threat' was held in check by the ties of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, this would not be the case once the alliance had been terminated. His dreadnought offer can thus be seen to be not so much an impulsive move intended to generate patriotic gratitude, but rather an attempt to begin a policy by which imperial ties would be strengthened, and by which the immediate and future needs of imperial defence could be met. New Zealand, as an integral part of the British Empire, would benefit indirectly at first, but then directly as the forces that had been supplied over the years by New Zealand and possibly the other Dominions were re-deployed into the Pacific to protect that region against Japanese aggression.

As a policy, this approach had the advantages of being both something that New Zealand could reasonably afford - since the financial arrangements for the dreadnought involved long-term payments from a sinking fund - and something which was consistent with rather than a reaction against the policies of the Admiralty. The only real weakness was that it did not immediately provide any direct defence for New Zealand; but Ward evidently felt that the Australasian Squadron performed this task adequately.

This policy was thus considerably different in its form of expression from that of Australia; and yet, as is also clear, it contained many of the same aims. Both Australia and New Zealand had attempted, in different ways, to improve the level of imperial defence; New Zealand by direct action, Australia by attempting to relieve the British of some of their responsibilities. Both Dominions were also interested in promoting themselves as

35. *Ibid* pp 47-52. Ward's diplomacy was erratic; he managed to avoid naming Japan most of the time, but occasionally let slip the name of the country that he meant.
important units within the overall imperial framework. The fact that the two Dominions managed to express their aims in such completely different ways can perhaps be attributed to some of the more subtle differences between them. As discussed in this chapter, feelings in New Zealand were more towards the maintenance of the imperial ties with Britain than was the case in Australia, and this was but one of a number of factors as the argument to this point has implied.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1909 NAVAL AGREEMENT

Following the offer of a dreadnought by New Zealand, the Australians, as will shortly be seen, renewed their requests for permission to establish a local navy of their own, and the Admiralty again found itself in a somewhat awkward position as far as its own defence policies in the South Pacific were concerned. It was quite evident to the Board that two separate strands of thinking had developed in the two Dominions, neither of which was entirely compatible with Admiralty requirements - although they were by no means ungrateful that Ward had offered a dreadnought.

The resolution to this problem was contained in the 1909 Naval Agreement, which was arrived at after consultations between the Admiralty and the Dominions at the 1909 Imperial Conference. This Agreement represented a compromise whereby the Admiralty was able to reconcile the varying requirements of themselves and of the two Dominions, and to reach an agreement that was satisfactory to all parties, and it was widely viewed at the time as the solution to the problem of providing adequate naval
forces in the Pacific at a time when the Admiralty was hard pressed to meet the German naval threat in the North Sea.

As a compromise the solution was decidedly more in line with Australian ideas than with those of New Zealand, and indeed it tended to undermine some of the basic tenets of the naval defence policy that Ward was attempting to promote. The basis of the Admiralty proposal was that three 'Fleet Units' would be provided for the defence of the Pacific. One of these would be paid for and operated by the Australians; a second would incorporate the New Zealand dreadnought, which for the purposes of the unit would take the form of a battlecruiser rather than a dreadnought. Here was where the problem for New Zealand lay, since battlecruisers were by no means as powerful as dreadnoughts, and the ship would not be in the North Sea in any case. Hence some of the purpose behind Ward's offer had been defeated; he made comments to this effect at the time. Nevertheless he agreed to the Admiralty proposals.

It seems likely that the Fleet Unit concept had been devised more with the Australians than the New Zealanders in mind because the former had been causing the Admiralty a good deal of trouble. Indeed, the dreadnought offer provoked the Australian government into renewing its demands for permission to build an independent navy.

There was in fact an interesting dichotomy in the Australian response to Ward's move. As far as the general public were concerned, Ward's dreadnought offer had represented the only possible course of action. On the day that the offer was announced, the Australian stock exchange passed a resolution calling on the Commonwealth parliament to make a similar offer. The Lord Mayor of Sydney opened a 'dreadnought' fund, some fifty five thousand pounds being
subscribed to it within twenty four hours (in 1909 monies, no less!) and a few days later the Lord Mayor also called for a public subscription of some two hundred and fifty thousand pounds from the people of the state for a dreadnought. In Perth, there were heated scenes where a motion was passed at a public meeting to the effect that Australia should do all that it could to help British supremacy. The Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria jointly announced that if the Federal government did not make a dreadnought offer to Britain, then they would. They followed this public announcement up a few days later with an official telegram to the Colonial Office confirming their offer.

Ward's move had evidently touched on an issue about which the Australian people felt strongly. However, the response of the Australian government, despite public reaction, was to deny any plan to offer a dreadnought. Uncertainty concerning finance was one reason cited. On March 31st, the Prime Minister announced that instead of offering a dreadnought, Australia was going to spend five million pounds on the formation of an Australian naval force. This would consist initially of twenty destroyers, and expenditure in the first year would amount to some six hundred and fifty thousand pounds. To the Admiralty the Prime Minister, Fisher, indicated with his official request for permission to build the fleet that he was prepared to allow British officers to run the ships, and to allow the Admiralty to periodically inspect the fleet in order to ensure that it came adequately

2. CD 4948 'Conference with the Representatives of the Self-Governing Dominions on the Naval and Military Defence of the Empire, 1909'. p 3. Hereafter referred to as CD 4948 'Conference'
up to their standards. 4

This naval plan, which was essentially the same as that of 1906-07, was instantly attacked by local and foreign newspapers. The *Daily Telegraph* claimed that such a force would be useless unless attached to an overseas squadron, while the *Morning Herald* argued that destroyers did not in fact give local immunity to attack. 5 The *Evening Post* questioned the decision on the basis that, even with such a force, Australia's real defence would still rest with the Royal Navy. 6

Considerable criticism continued to be levelled at the Australian government over the next few months, primarily on the basis that the decision not to offer a dreadnought was unpatriotic and against the wishes of the Australian people. Indeed, the government's decision not to offer a dreadnought was one of the reasons why it went out of office in the June elections.

The first act of the new government, under Deakin, was to telegraph a dreadnought offer to London, 7 but this was merely to satisfy public opinion; and when Colonel J.F.G.Foxton was sent to the Imperial Conference which had been called in London so that all the Colonies and Dominions might discuss matters of naval and military defence, he went ready to argue once again in favour of a local Australian navy. 8

4. CD 4948 'Conference' pp:3-5.
5. As quoted by the *Evening Post*, 31st March 1909.
7. CD 4948 'Conference' p
8. WArch G2/16 Despatch No. 696/09 'Dominions No. 16' pp 7-8.
If Foxton had been expecting a confrontation, however, he was somewhat mistaken. The Admiralty had taken its own lessons from the events of the previous year and were keen to avoid any further disagreement. Under the direction of the First Sea Lord, a memorandum was prepared which outlined the Fleet Unit proposals and which was presented to all the delegates when they met in London at the end of July 1909.

Some historians have seen the Fleet Unit idea as representing the turning point in Admiralty attitudes towards the Australian proposals in particular. The Canadian historian Donald C. Gordon, for instance, in his article 'The Admiralty and Dominion Navies, 1902-14', suggested that the 1909 offer was 'brilliantly successful' in 'reconciling official Admiralty considerations with the nationalistic aspirations of the various Dominion governments', due largely to a 'further shift on the part of the Admiralty towards allowing separate naval development by the Dominions'.

The evidence suggests, however, that this assertion is not altogether correct. The argument that Australia and New Zealand wanted a more independent position within the Empire, rather than simply to promote their independence outside it, by their naval proposals, has already been made; and the notion that the Fleet Unit concept represented an actual shift in Admiralty policy is one which rests on somewhat shaky ground.

The fact of the matter was that the Admiralty had no intention of changing its policy of central control, and the Fleet Unit scheme had been carefully devised to ensure that this would remain so. While the Australians were being allowed to build

a Fleet Unit, this was to be very much a 'part of the Eastern Fleet of the Empire'. There was no question of independence; the Admiralty were going no further than 'remodelling...the squadrons maintained in Far Eastern waters' to form a new Pacific fleet which would consist of 'three units in the East Indies, Australia and China seas'.

In this manner the Admiralty hoped to be able to meet the demands of the Australians, yet to be able to retain their own authority within the area, and to be able also to provide a defence for the Pacific which would help to meet the requirements of the Dominions for additional protection without overly embarrassing the Japanese. The fact that Australia and New Zealand would meet at least half the planned cost of the intended deployments, the Australians supporting an entire unit and the New Zealand subsidy going to support the New Zealand battlecruiser in the China Unit, was an added bonus.

The idea of the Fleet Units from the strategic point of view was that singly they would be able to mop up raiding cruisers, and that together they would have the fighting power of a battle-squadron, giving them a not inconsiderable deterrent effect. They were also to have sufficient speed to be able to avoid action with a stronger opponent. Each unit therefore was to consist of a battlecruiser, three unarmoured cruisers, six destroyers, and three submarines.

This was not a concept with which Ward agreed. Although

PLATE 4

A rare photograph of HMS *New Zealand* steaming in to Akaroa Harbour during her visit to New Zealand in 1913. This picture shows clearly the arrangement of her main armament and particularly the spacing of her midship turrets (Q-turret is beneath the awning in this picture) which had been increased by comparison with the *Invincibles* in order to give some measure of eight-gun broadside fire. Note also the high freeboard and the thick slab of armour abaft P-turret, indicating a general absence of side armour elsewhere. For statistical details see Table 5.1. (Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref. No. 70463½).
the enthusiasm of Fisher ensured that any doubts within the Admiralty about the combat-worthiness of his battlecruisers - which he himself felt to be 'better than dreadnoughts' - remained well hidden, Ward objected to the proposal not on the grounds that it altered his offer from a dreadnought to a battlecruiser, but rather because his intention had been to reinforce the fleets in the North Sea, which was where he perceived the more immediate danger.

Nevertheless he gave his assent to the plans laid before him by the Admiralty, provided that two of the unarmoured cruisers, three of the destroyers, and two of the submarines from the China Unit were stationed in New Zealand waters. To this the First Lord of the Admiralty, Reginald McKenna, agreed although it was not a modification that fitted well with the Admiralty's plans since it split the China Unit in two, rendering each half incapable of performing the duties intended for the whole.

Documentary evidence does not specifically indicate why Ward made this condition before he would agree to the proposal. However, it is possible to conjecture on the basis of existing material that he was not overly interested in a naval force stationed in Hong Kong; that his primary and immediate concerns lay in the defence of New Zealand by strengthening the British naval position in the North Sea. Should war break out, and enemy raiding cruisers manage to escape the British blockade in this area, he wanted the means in New Zealand waters to be able to prevent such raiders from attacking coastal trade. This was not something that a Fleet Unit based in Australian waters could guarantee if both Dominions felt themselves to be threatened simultaneously by raiders.

13. As he wrote to King Edward in 1907. F.G. II p 140.
Ward's move thus represented an attempt to bend the Admiralty proposal into a form which favoured the New Zealand proposal to a somewhat greater extent than had previously been the case. McKenna had agreed quite readily to the alteration perhaps because the changes did not represent any particular loss to the British, whose primary concern was in the North Sea, and perhaps also because the splitting of the China Unit reduced any implication that the Japanese might be the potential enemy against whom the new dispositions were being made. Ward, it will be recalled, did not himself feel that the Japanese represented any immediate threat as long as the alliance ties remained.

The Australians agreed to the Admiralty proposals without requiring any modifications, and so before the delegates left London the 1909 Naval Agreement, which embodied the Admiralty's plans and the modifications that had been agreed to during the negotiations, was signed.

As far as the Australians were concerned, this Agreement was eminently satisfactory, and procided them with the fleet which they had wanted for nearly a decade. By the terms of the Agreement, the Australians were to spend some 3,695,000 pounds on the construction of their Fleet Unit, and a further 600,000 pounds annually on its upkeep, this figure including interest payments on the sinking fund which was to be raised in order to provide the capital cost. The annual subsidy was to be paid up to the time that the existing Australasian Squadron was relieved by the Fleet Unit. 15

Ward too, it would seem, had cause to be reasonably satisfied with the outcome of the Conference, since although he had not

achieved his original aim of providing a 'dreadnought of the latest type'\textsuperscript{16} to reinforce the North Sea fleets, he had been given no reason to suppose that the battlecruiser for which New Zealand would be paying would be any less powerful a reinforcement for Pacific waters than a dreadnought would have been.

Indeed, the \textit{Indefatigable}, which was at that time the only existing unit of the type intended to be built for service with the Fleet Units, was being publicly heralded as a wonder-vessel, being credited with having much higher speed, heavier armour, and more powerful guns, than she actually possessed. Much of this public mis-information was corrected after the end of the First World War, when the ships had become obsolete and with the defeat of the Germans the need to obscure their true capabilities had passed;\textsuperscript{17} but it is a testament perhaps to the persistence of propaganda that at least one item of mis-information was never corrected and has been quoted as a true statistic in reference works ever since.\textsuperscript{18}

As far as Ward was concerned, the selection of the \textit{Indefatigable} type to represent the dreadnought offer also carried with

\begin{thebibliography}{99}

\bibitem{16} Ibid p 1.

\bibitem{17} Compare the armour belt thickness of nine inches quoted in \textit{Jane's Fighting Ships 1914} (Sampson Low Marston, London 1914, David & Charles Reprints, London 1969) p 44 with that of six inches (the correct figure) quoted in the 1919 edition (Sampson Low Marston, London 1919, David & Charles Reprints, London, 1969) p 67. The only exaggeration to which the ships actually lived up was their speed, which turned out to be 2 knots higher than had been intended in the design. N.J.M.Campbell \textit{Battlecruisers} (Conway Maritime Press, London 1978) p 15.

\bibitem{18} All reference works except Campbell p 13 refer to the \textit{Indefatigables} as mounting eight 12-inch 50 calibre weapons, whereas in fact as indicated in HMS \textit{New Zealand Ship's Book} (WTu MSS) Folio 2, they mounted the earlier 45-calibre model. See e.g. Parkes pp 512-13, Archibald p 87, \textit{Jane's 1914} p 44, \textit{Jane's 1919} p 67, Tony Gibbons \textit{ Battleships and Battlecruisers} (Salamander Books, Lansdowne Press, London 1983) pp 184-85.
\end{thebibliography}
it the advantage that this was the most cost-effective capital ship type of the dreadnought period, the cost of £ 82-10-6 per ton comparing very favourably with the £101-12-0 per ton that it had cost to build the first battlecruisers, the Invincibles. Thus, although Ward had been prepared to spend up to two million pounds, the course of action he had taken promised a saving of some hundreds of thousands of pounds over what the cost might otherwise have been. 19

But while officially the British were immensely pleased with the Indefatigable when she was laid down in late 1908 - Fisher even wrote to Esher claiming that the ship 'would make your mouth water...and the Germans gnash their teeth',20 - some doubts were privately expressed within the Admiralty about the combat effectiveness of the design now that the Germans had laid down their own battlecruiser, the Von der Tann, and the possibility of the British battlecruisers coming up against vessels with similar gun-power had arisen.

In this instance the British ships, as the Controller Admiral Sir John Jellicoe pointed out, were 'very insufficiently protected'. 21 When in early 1909 he received 'secret information' to the effect that the Germans were building battlecruisers of very much greater displacement than had been anticipated by the Naval Intelligence Department, 22 he arranged for the Indefatigable's successors, which

20. Quoted in Parkes p 512.
22. The ships referred to were the Moltke and Goeben which displaced 22,616 tons, an increase of nearly 3,000 tons over the Von der Tann and just over 4,000 more than the Indefatigable. Campbell pp 13, 26, 32; Parkes pp 513-17.
were to have been very similar to the *Indefatigable*, to be radically altered, resulting in ships that were faster and much more heavily armed and armoured than the *Indefatigables*. The first vessel of this new type was HMS *Lion*, laid down in September 1909 as one of the four 'contingent' dreadnoughts of the 1908-09 programme, and a full nine months before the two *Indefatigable* class battlecruisers were laid down for Australia and New Zealand.

The dramatic increase in size and power that the *Lion* represented over the *Indefatigable* and her two sister ships is made clear on the following table.

**TABLE 5.1**

**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS**

**INDEFATIGABLE AND LION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indefatigable</th>
<th>Lion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Designed</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>18,500 tons</td>
<td>26,475 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>25 knots*</td>
<td>27 knots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>555 x 80 x 25'</td>
<td>698 x 88 x 26'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armament</td>
<td>8-12&quot;/45 cal, 16-4&quot;/50 cal.</td>
<td>8-13.5&quot;/45 cal, 16-4&quot;/50 cal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armour</td>
<td>4-6&quot; belt, 3-6&quot; barbettes, 1-1½&quot; decks, 7&quot; turrets.</td>
<td>6-9&quot; belt, 3-9&quot; barbettes, 1-1½&quot; decks, 9&quot; turrets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Actually 26-27 knots in service.

The timing of these developments leads one to ask why it was that the Admiralty did not specify the *Lions* as the battlecruiser

element of the Fleet Units. These vessels were, after all, much more powerful than the Indefatigables and yet in terms of cost were within the sum that the Dominions had indicated a willingness to pay in order to fulfil their offers.

Documentary evidence points to only one factor that may have influenced the Admiralty's decision, this being that relating to the availability of gun mountings. However, it seems likely that there were a number of other considerations which the Admiralty had to bear in mind when selecting the Indefatigables rather than the Lions to represent the Dominion dreadnought offers.

Perhaps most important of these considerations was that during the critical period of negotiations between the Admiralty and the Dominions, when the Fleet Unit proposals were being discussed and when concrete data and definite cost estimates were required, the Lion class was still under design and much of the relevant data was still only approximate. Consequently it was easier for the Admiralty to suggest that a proven and quantified design be built. Until the Lion was finalised there was no reason in any case to assume that the Indefatigables would necessarily be completely outclassed.

The Admiralty were also not eager to make public their intentions with regard to future trends in ship design; it was by no means in their interest to reveal what their response to the latest German developments was, or even that they were responding at all. The British were well aware of the value of such a policy. In 1905, for instance, when the Invincibles were being designed, Fisher had 'leaked' information to the effect that they would be armed with 9.2 inch guns. The Germans in consequence had built the 8.2 inch gun armed Blucher which was of dubious value in the dreadnought era and, of course, no match for the Invincible
which actually mounted 12-inch guns.

The anticipated role of the Fleet Units in the Pacific also meant that, as far as the Admiralty were concerned, the ships would be unlikely to have to engage anything heavier than enemy raiding cruisers. This was what the *Indefatigables* had been designed to do from the outset, and the argument that their armour was inadequate in a battle-line did not apply; hence there was no need to build the later vessels.

Deployment in the Pacific also brought the Japanese into consideration, and it might well have been considered an affront to the alliance ties had the Admiralty condoned the deployment of Britain's latest and most powerful vessels into the Pacific.

Arguably, these reasons alone would probably have sufficed to cause the selection of the *Indefatigables* for the Dominions, and it can perhaps be said that had any doubt remained, the issue would have been clinched in any case by the availability of heavy gun mountings.

Production of heavy guns and mountings was a slow process, the Admiralty having to order the guns well in advance of the ships on which they were to be fitted. Even so, there was still on average a six-month delay beyond the contract delivery date. It would have been possible for the ordinance firms to increase their gun-manufacturing plant, but they were reluctant to do so in an atmosphere of arms-reduction. 27 The numbers of capital ships built per annum actually decreased between 1904 and 1907, although the demand for heavy guns remained high because the latter ships mounted ten, as against four for each pre-dreadnought.

Delays in the provision of guns remained at an acceptable level as long as the rate of dreadnought construction did not suddenly increase. But this was precisely what happened in 1909. In that year, an unusually large number of dreadnought-type vessels were laid down. Destined for British service were the four additional 'contingent' ships of the 1908-09 programme, the two gift battle-cruisers, and the four ships of the 1909-10 programme; and also under construction in British yards were the first four dreadnoughts to be built in Britain for foreign powers.28

With this greatly increased number of vessels came also the change in the *Lion*, *Orion* and all subsequent classes to the 13.5-inch, 45-calibre weapon. The armaments industry thus had to cope in 1909-10 not only with providing plant for future 13.5-inch constructions, but also with the bottleneck created by the extra 13.5-inch ships of the 1908-09 'contingent' group, which were in addition to those similarly armed ships of the ordinary 1909-10 programme. To provide yet more guns for a further two 'one-off' ships would have either incurred long delays, or forced the armaments companies to construct additional plant which, having coped with the extra 13.5-inch gun demand of that year, would then have lain idle. Neither alternative was particularly acceptable and thus from this viewpoint also it was more convenient to use the existing 12-inch gunned designs for the Dominion vessels.

It can be argued, then, that for reasons of convenience during negotiations, secrecy in the arms-race, role of the vessels, the obligations of international politics, and the availability of heavy guns, the British decided to select the *Indefatigables*

28. These were the *Minas Geraes* and *Sao Paulo* for Brazil, and the *Espana* and *Alfonso XIII* for Spain. *Jane's* 1914 pp 392 & 435.
rather than the *Lions* to form the core of the Fleet Units. The public acclaim directed towards the former vessels was such that the Admiralty were able to gain the agreement of the two Dominions gifting the battlecruisers without debate — this despite the fact that, in the case of New Zealand, the Admiralty's actions clearly went against Ward's stated intention of providing a vessel of the 'latest' type.

It is evident from the argument presented in this chapter that the Admiralty's Fleet Unit proposals were directed more towards the satisfaction of Australian demands, and their reconciliation with the aims of the Admiralty, than with conforming to anything that New Zealand might have wanted. The arrangement to which Ward had agreed in London did not represent the fulfilment of his intention to provide the latest dreadnought for service in European waters at all, and although he had no reason to suppose that the vessel being built at his Dominion's expense would be any less good than a 'dreadnought of the latest type', it was to be stationed in the Pacific as part of the arrangement which in point of fact represented in many respects the fulfilment of Australian needs.

But the 1909 Naval Agreement did not represent the complete failure of Ward's intention to strengthen imperial defence as a whole, thus improving New Zealand's defences both by strengthening the European crisis area and by releasing forces to defend New Zealand's coastline. Ward had, after all, arranged for ships to be stationed in New Zealand waters. Thus he had at least achieved the second aim of his policy, even though he had to face up to the failure of the first. The irony of the matter was that, as events turned out, it was Ward's first aim that was ultimately successful, and the second that ultimately failed.
CHAPTER SIX

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION, 1911-13

Ward's dreadnought offer provided the Admiralty with a very useful route by which the naval defence requirements of Australia in particular could be met at minimal cost to Britain, and without any overt policy shift on the part of the Admiralty. This route also reconciled the opposing naval defence policy expressions of the two South Pacific Dominions in a manner which both found to be reasonably acceptable.

But as events turned out, the plan encapsulated in the 1909 Naval Agreement was not finally followed. While the Australians went ahead with the construction of their own defence in the form of their Fleet Unit, thus relieving the British of the task of defending the South Pacific, New Zealand waited in vain for the cruisers that had been promised; and it had become clear by the end of 1912 that the British, worried by new developments in the North Sea, would not release the ships into the Pacific necessary to form the China Unit and to provide the immediate defence of New Zealand's coastline.

The new Prime Minister, Massey, was placed in a difficult sit-
uation since the British failure to keep their part of the 1909 agreement led to considerable pressure being placed on Massey to do something about it. Because New Zealand was committed to paying for the battlecruiser, now named HMS New Zealand, little finance was available for further naval activities, which restricted the range of options. Massey's Minister of Defence, Colonel James Allen, took the opportunity to promote his own ideas which involved the establishment of a semi-independent naval force for New Zealand. But this was not what Massey wanted, and when in late 1913 he did in fact authorise a cruiser to be paid for and operated by New Zealand, this represented merely an attempt to return to the situation that had been planned by Ward, and outright purchase of a cruiser to defend New Zealand had been the only option left open by the British. It was an act forced on Massey by circumstance and did not represent any fundamental change in approach by New Zealand.

At the end of 1909, the 'Naval Defence Act 1909' was passed in New Zealand. This authorised the Minister of Finance to contract with those in the United Kingdom with regard to the building of a battlecruiser; the cost was not to exceed two million pounds, and a sinking fund was to be raised in order to provide the finance, this being repaid over a period of eighteen years. The ship thus built would belong to Britain and be free of any control that New Zealand might wish to exercise. 1

Ward had essentially been correct when in 1907 he had argued at the Colonial Conference that New Zealand could not afford any further major defence commitments, and although the sinking fund obviated the need to immediately find the necessary capital to

finance the battlecruiser (one assumes that Ward hoped that the economic situation would have improved by the time the government came to make the capital repayments) expenditure nonetheless rose sharply from 1910 as the money had to be found to meet the interest payments on the sums that were borrowed. Because the subsidy continued to be paid to Britain, the naval defence expenditure of New Zealand virtually doubled in the three years from 1910 to 1913. The figures listed on the following table illustrate the growth of this expenditure.

**TABLE 6.1**

**NAVAL DEFENCE EXPENDITURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Loan Raised*</th>
<th>Interest On Loan*</th>
<th>Naval Subsidy*</th>
<th>Total Paid*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>489,289</td>
<td>8,904</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>108,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>605,711</td>
<td>91,687</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>191,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>103,102</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>203,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>69,035</td>
<td>126,995</td>
<td>50,000#</td>
<td>176,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All sums in pounds sterling.

#At the request of the Admiralty, the remaining half of the subsidy was held over until 31st March 1914.

Interest payments on the total sum raised by these loans continued to be made throughout the First World War, during which time there was a significant improvement in New Zealand's economy, the boom lasting into the early 1920's.\(^3\) In 1922 the method of payment was altered so that the capital was slowly repaid along with the


3. W.B. Sutch 'Depression Between the Wars' from *Colony or Nation?* pp 37-45, esp. pp 38-39.
interest; however, the slump in the economy during the 1920's made this increasingly difficult, and the Great Depression worsened matters to the point where repayments had to be suspended in 1931. They were not resumed for some years, and the final repayment was not made until the 1944-45 financial year. 4

The possibility that ultimately paying for the battlecruiser might prove difficult did not however seem to overly worry Ward. Once the wheels had been set in motion, rapid progress was made on the construction of the ship, and the Admiralty proved to be very co-operative in helping to smooth the process of construction. Relations between New Zealand, Australia and the Admiralty reached a high-point during this period. The evidence does make clear, however, that the Admiralty were prepared to extend this co-operation only in so far as it did not interfere with their own intention of maintaining naval superiority over the Germans, and that this attitude later took both Dominions somewhat by surprise.

In order to assist the New Zealand government as far as was possible in arranging the construction of the battlecruiser, the Admiralty acted as an agent for the New Zealand government, and called in late 1909 for tenders; that of the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company was accepted in January 1910 and although the official contract was not signed until six months later, work on the vessel began at once. 5


A number of administrative procedures were set up to smooth the process of financing and construction. These can only be described as tortuous. Because the ship was being built to the Admiralty's specifications, the Board was responsible for ordering the fittings. But payment was made by the New Zealand government and as a result the builder would bill the Admiralty normally for the parts specified, accounts being then sent to the New Zealand High Commissioner, who at that time was Sir William Hall-Jones. He in turn would then cable Ward for authorisation to spend the requested sum. This procedure would have been cumbersome at the best of times, but was followed for virtually every item of equipment, even down to a request, for instance, for twenty pounds to fit an extra dipole switch in an on-board workshop. On another occasion, a sum of one pound was refunded because a number of brass hooks had not been used after all. Again this refund ran the gamut of the red tape. The scrupulous honesty of the builder is worth noting in this context but one wonders whether, in view of the expense of the administrative system, it was entirely worth it.

The Admiralty made every effort to secure the best deal for New Zealand. For instance, in August 1910 Hall-Jones wrote to Ward asking for authority to spend some one hundred and ninety thousand pounds on armour plating, and added that he had learned in confidence from Jellicoe that 'the armour for the cruiser would be as per a recent pattern (much superior to Krupp armour)' the specification for which had not been made public. This was not strictly true, but as discussed the Admiralty was publishing

7. WAre IA Series 71/1, 1913/661, Parts I-IV.
8. Ibid.
a good deal of mis-information at the time about vessels of that class.

Consultations were also held between Ward and the Admiralty over an extended period concerning the name of the vessel. Legally the Admiralty had sole responsibility for selecting the names of their ships, but in the event they not only allowed Ward to make the selection, but also permitted him to influence the re-naming of a pre-dreadnought battleship the name of which, HMS New Zealand, was the same as that intended for the new battlecruiser. 9

But while the Admiralty extended these courtesies, they were beginning to have second thoughts about the major premises of the 1909 Agreement, particularly as they applied to New Zealand. By 1912, Fisher had gone from the Admiralty, and the German 'menace' seemed to be looming darker by the month as Admiral Tirpitz used every means at his disposal to increase the size of his fleet.

To the Admiralty, and particularly the new First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, 10 the situation was becoming serious. Allowing a Dominion to exercise an influence over such matters as naming ships was, in practical terms, no loss to the North Sea fighting strength of the Royal Navy; however, sending ships into the Pacific constituted what Churchill felt to be a serious loss, and so when the time came to establish the China Fleet Unit, the Admiralty balked.

9. Ibid. See Appendix 1 for further details of these negotiations.

The failure of the Admiralty to honour their agreement with New Zealand was not something that they had planned from the beginning. Rather, it was the result of circumstance and the style of strategic thinking that was circulating at the time.

British defence thinking in the immediate pre-war period remained heavily influenced by Fisherian doctrine, and by the 'Bolt from the Blue' school of thought. The two dictated a form of defence planning that was dominated by a fear of a sudden German strike at a time when the Germans were at their optimum strength, but when the British were weakened due to ships being absent for repair, refit, or on foreign service. Naval strengths were measured in terms of dreadnoughts alone; the 50:20 preponderance that the British had in pre-dreadnoughts had been forgotten. The belief also remained that the moment war broke out in any case, the Germans would issue forth from Wilhelmshaven in order to challenge the British to a kind of 'super-Trafalgar'.

The number of dreadnoughts actually built and put into service by Britain thus had to considerably exceed the number that would be expected to fight, but the provision of such numbers within reasonable budgetary constraints was not easy. In February 1911 Churchill, in an attempt to keep the Estimates down to manageable levels, proposed a reduction in ship construction which would be compensated for by 'securing' the two 'Colonial dreadnoughts'. This suggestion did not come to anything.

But by the end of that year it became clear that Tirpitz would...


succeed in persuading the *Reichstag* to modify the Navy Law by which German construction was fixed, increasing the total specified in the law by three dreadnoughts, making a total of fifteen to be built over the following six years. At the same time, it was also becoming evident that both the Italians and the Austro-Hungarians would shortly complete several dreadnoughts of their own, and that more were building.

Considerable concern was expressed in Britain, 'The naval increases are serious and will require new and vigorous measures on our part', wrote Churchill on January 31st, and added that 'the addition to our Estimates consequent on the German increase will not be less than three million a year'.

As part of his 'vigorous measures' he proposed that one way of easing the problem would be to station two 'Colonial' battlecruisers in Home waters along with the other ships due to form the Pacific Fleet Units. Writing to the Secretary of State, Lewis Harcourt, he suggested that the Australians would probably want to keep their battlecruiser although this ship was 'so important to our fleet in Home waters'. His suggestion was that in view of this and the fact that the subsidy from Australia would shortly cease, that 'we should reduce our force in Australian waters at the earliest possible moment to a minimum'.

He enclosed a telegram with the letter to inform the New Zealand government of the situation; Harcourt, however, did not send it and instead wrote back suggesting that it would be best to consult Cabinet before informing the Dominions. To this

Churchill agreed, and he included in his presentations to Cabinet a memorandum that argued essentially along the lines that Ward had taken in 1909, that

- two or three Australian and New Zealand dreadnoughts if brought into line in the North Sea might turn the scale and make victory not merely certain but complete. The same two or three dreadnoughts in Australian waters would be useless the day after the defeat of the British Navy in Home waters. 15

He added that 'time will be required before the true principles of naval policy are comprehended in the Dominions', hence the Admiralty agreement to allow the Australians their own fleet. The Japanese threat to the Dominions was recognised, but Churchill felt that there would be no attack from the Japanese due to a 'strong continuing bond of self-interest'. 16

Cabinet agreed to the proposals, but a request for permission to re-locate HMS New Zealand was not forwarded to New Zealand until April 18th, and although Harcourt's telegram was virtually identical to that given to him by Churchill three months before, one line was omitted, reading 'the Admiralty feel that prompt action of this kind on the part of New Zealand might play an important part in retarding and certainly of balancing the growth of European naval armaments'. 17 Possibly Harcourt felt that Churchill had been labouring the point. Britain's actual position was that, while the ships of the Australian

15. Ibid p 1513.
17. Ibid p 1510. For comparison with Harcourt's telegram see WArc IA Series 71/1, 1913/661, Part III.
Fleet Unit had been paid for by that Dominion, and hence could be stationed only in Australian waters. HMS New Zealand had been given to Britain with no restrictions being placed on her location, and hence could be stationed wherever the Admiralty saw fit without any legal complications. To request New Zealand for permission to move the ship was merely in deference to the 1909 Naval Agreement.

As it happened, the Admiralty need not have worried. The then Prime Minister of New Zealand, Thomas Mackenzie, promptly replied to Harcourt's telegram to the effect that the ship 'should be stationed where Home government consider her service of the most value'.

It was an ironic turn of events. Ward had not been in favour of placing the ship in Chinese waters in the first place, because he intended the vessel to reinforce the fleets in the North Sea. The location in Hong Kong had been imposed upon him by the general terms of the Agreement; but now the British were altering that Agreement in a manner which coincided exactly with his original intentions.

The position late in April 1912 was thus that the Australians had largely achieved their aim of being permitted to have a semi-independent naval force of their own in Australian waters; and that the policies of Ward too had been achieved since the battle-cruiser had gone to strengthen the North Sea fleets, and there were also smaller ships coming out from Britain to act as a direct defence of New Zealand's coastline.

But it shortly became clear that these cruisers and destroyers,

18. WARC IA Series 71/1, 1913/661, Part III.
although supposedly earmarked for location in the South Pacific, would not in fact arrive.

Churchill again had good reason for withholding the vessels. As First Sea Lord, Fisher had refused point blank to authorise the construction of any light cruisers, feeling that this type of vessel was unnecessary in a fleet that included battlecruisers. He had in this instance taken his ideas to extremes, since there could never be enough battlecruisers to fulfil any effective scouting duties. However, the practical result was that for several years Britain had no light cruiser construction, so that although Fisher was persuaded to relent in the 1907-08 programme, there was afterwards a grave shortage of such vessels - right up until the time, in fact, that some of the war emergency programmes started to take effect in 1915-16.

The two Bristol class cruisers and ancillary vessels intended for New Zealand waters thus were needed elsewhere. As a kind of compensation, the Admiralty offered to send two old 'P' class cruisers of the type that had formed the Auxiliary Squadron in the 1890's out to New Zealand. As Churchill later pointed out to the New Zealand Minister of Defence, Colonel James Allen, more than this was unnecessary since there were no vessels of equal power to be countered in New Zealand waters. 19

This move was not received well in New Zealand, since developments had been taking place since the year before which had added to the general uneasiness towards Japan. During 1911 both Dominions had expressed considerable concern about the Anglo-

19. C.V.III, 3, p 1758. It is worth noting in passing that one of the two ships, HMS Philomel, had been involved in August 1896 in a 38-minute war against Zanzibar. This action was the Philomel's only claim to fame until she was sent to New Zealand. See Sir William Laird Clowes The Royal Navy: A History (Sampson Low Marston & Co, London 1903, reprinted by AMS Press Co., New York 1966.) VII, pp 436-37.
PLATE 5.
The Royal Navy cruiser HMS Philomel, seen here in New Zealand waters where she served from 1913 to 1947, although she was not actively at sea after the end of the First World War. Obsolete when she was sent to New Zealand, she had in fact been reprieved from Fisher's scrap-heap of some 156 vessels which could 'neither fight nor run away', and represented the best that the British felt they could send without compromising their own position in the North Sea. For statistical details see Table 6.2. (Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Ref No. 15491½).
Japanese Alliance, which was coming up for its second renewal. In response to requests by the two Dominions for information on their strategic position, the CID had in May 1911 produced two reports on the matter, one covering the position of both Dominions should the Anglo-Japanese Alliance be terminated, the other examining the likely scale of attack against New Zealand from elsewhere should the Alliance continue as before. Both reports were essentially oriented towards allaying Dominion fears, emphasising that even if the Alliance ended, the deterrent effect of the Royal Navy would suffice to prevent all but a few cruiser raids in time of war.\(^20\) The scale of attack against New Zealand expected from Japan 'or elsewhere' was not sufficient to justify the stationing of either armoured cruisers or battleships in New Zealand waters.\(^21\)

Such statements did not reduce the fears that were being expressed within New Zealand both publicly and in governmental circles - although the general public were not of course aware of the opinions of the CID, they nevertheless realised that the removal of cruisers from New Zealand waters represented the effective loss of all immediate naval defence. As far as the government was concerned, the CID papers seemed to indicate that cruiser raids were expected; and while Australia could use her Fleet Unit to defend herself, New Zealand had no such protection. Thus, when at the end of 1912 it became clear that nothing more than two obsolete light cruisers would be sent out to New Zealand waters, considerable dismay was expressed.

The degree to which the effective direct naval defence of

\(^{20}\) W ARC G40/10, Secret Paper 442M.

\(^{21}\) W ARC G40/10 'New Zealand: Scale of Attack under Existing Conditions'. 
New Zealand had fallen by the substitution of two 'P' class cruisers for the expected Bristols is made clear on the following table. Arguably, while even two of the latter would be hard pressed to fight enemy armoured cruisers, they could at least use their superior speed to tactical advantage.  

TABLE 6.2

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Philomel</th>
<th>Bristol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Designed</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>2,575 tons</td>
<td>4,800 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>16 knots*</td>
<td>25 knots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>265 x 41 x 17' x 15½'</td>
<td>430 x 47 x 15½'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armament</td>
<td>8-4.7&quot;, 8-3 pdr, 4 Nordenfeldts, 4-14&quot; TT.</td>
<td>2-6&quot;, 10-4&quot;, 4-3 pdr, 2-18&quot; TT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armour</td>
<td>2½&quot; deck</td>
<td>3-.75&quot; deck, 4&quot; TT, 6&quot; conning tower.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*19 knots forced draft, although by 1913 this was generally unattainable even for short periods.

The Prime Minister, Massey, could not be induced to comment on the situation, and when at the end of 1912 the Minister of Defence, Colonel James Allen, was sent to London for consultations with the Admiralty on the issue, many local newspapers took the opportunity to criticise Massey on the basis that his government lacked any definite form of defence policy. The New Zealand Times even went...

22. As the Bristol herself did in order to escape from the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau during the Battle of Coronel in November 1914. For discussion see Jack Sweetman 'Coronel: Anatomy of a Disaster' from Naval Warfare Ch 5 pp 70-89.


so far as to claim that New Zealand, alone among the nations, was
groping blind in the field of defence.  

Allen blamed Ward for the situation, writing later that he did
not think Ward had any idea of naval policy at all.  

But when Allen himself arrived in London, he had only a vague plan to present to
the Admiralty which revolved around the possibility of New Zealand
establishing its own naval force.

These notions perhaps unsurprisingly met with the same kind of
chilly reception that had greeted the similar Australian ideas of
ten years before. Negotiations were not helped by the evident dis-like that Allen and Churchill took to one another. Of their meetings,
Allen wrote diplomatically in 1929 that 'from the first it was
evident that the First Lord held opinions as to the attitude New
Zealand should adopt which differed from mine'.  

Churchill felt that Allen was 'full of very foolish and retrogressive ideas'.  

Surviving records of their discussions reveal that, although the
language remained diplomatic much of the time, there was consider-
able tension between the two men,  

and on one occasion Harcourt
felt sufficiently agitated by the state of affairs that he secretly
sent the minutes of one meeting to the Governor General of New
Zealand, with a covering letter explaining that he, Harcourt, felt

25. New Zealand Times, Nov. 29th 1912. Clipping from W Arc Allen
Papers, Box 14 (Newspapers).

26. W Arc Allen Papers, Naval Defence - General. Un-numbered file,
letter 12th Feb. 1914 to the Australian Minister of Defence.

27. Sir James Allen 'New Zealand and Naval Defence' (pamphlet,
New Zealand Historical Association, Wellington 1929) p 5.


29. See, e.g. W Arc G48/N17 'Extract from the Minutes of the 123rd
Meeting of the CID Held on 11th April 1913'.
The Japanese armoured cruiser HMJS Azuma. Displacement: 9,456 tons. Dimensions: 430' x 50' x 25'. Armament: 4-8", 12-6", 12-12 pdrs, 5 TT. Armour: 7-3" belt, 2½" decks, 6" turrets, 6" casemates, 5" side above belt. Speed: 20 knots. Completed 1899. (Jane's 1914 p 233.) It was vessels typified by the Azuma that the New Zealand government, following CID recommendations, felt might well attack New Zealand's coastal trade and harbours during wartime, and against such vessels small cruisers like the Philomel (Plate 5) would have been useless. Ironically this photograph was taken as the Azuma and her consort Ibuki steamed in to Wellington harbour in 1914 to escort an Anzac troop convoy. (Photograph courtesy of the Kinnear Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Ref. No. 16713½).
it necessary to inform those in New Zealand of the actual situation in London.  

Allen continued to make little headway, and by the time that he left London had agreed only that the annual subsidy then being paid to the Admiralty would be used instead to pay for the manning of the old cruisers to be stationed in New Zealand waters.  

The Admiralty had in fact offered to send a third old cruiser out to New Zealand waters, but this was not entirely what Allen wanted, as he pointed out to Churchill on several occasions. The situation had not been resolved when Allen left London, and the exasperated Churchill finally wrote to him at the end of August to the effect that Britain did not actually have any fast cruisers to spare. In any case, he continued,  

no military need exists at present for vessels of this speed. There are apparently no foreign cruisers of an equal type which require to be met within thousands of miles of New Zealand. If there were, we should immediately match them by similar vessels.  

Massey, on receiving Allen’s report, asked the Admiralty whether they might not consider sending two Bristol class cruisers out to New Zealand waters, and received a reply to the effect that this was not possible, and that if New Zealand wanted such ships then they would have to pay for them; two would cost 700,000 pounds.

30. WArc G48/N17 'Imperial Naval Policy of New Zealand', CID paper 25th April 1913, with letter by Harcourt.  
31. WArc Allen Papers, Naval Defence (General), Allen to Massey, 21st February 1913.  
32. C.V.III, 3, p 1758.  
Massey seemingly had little option, and in consequence of this reply announced at the end of October 1913 his intention to have one Bristol class cruiser built for service in New Zealand waters, and for this ship to be manned and operated by New Zealanders. In the event of war control would pass to the British government. 'I have no doubt,' he announced to the House 'that the Imperial authorities are, in their judgement, doing the best possible in the interests of the Empire as a whole, but the New Zealand government think a commencement should be made to improve the naval position in the South Pacific'.

This action has been interpreted by some analysts as representing the institution of a new naval policy aimed at providing New Zealand with at least a token independent naval force. But in fact this was not the case. Although Allen wanted such a force, there is no evidence that Massey agreed with such ideas, and indeed the evidence suggests that Massey was more in favour of Ward's approach to New Zealand's defence problems. His aim in purchasing a cruiser was not so much to emulate the Australians, but rather because he had been given no choice by the British if he wished to have some form of immediate defence of New Zealand's shores. By providing a vessel he was thus restoring the naval defence position approximately to that which had existed before the British had withdrawn the promised cruisers; and there is no real indication that he intended to do anything else.

34. WARC N1/22/6/9, 'Naval Defence', statement by Massey p 3.
35. This was the interpretation of T.G. Weir 'New Zealand's Naval Policy, 1909-14' (Unpub. M.A. thesis, Canterbury 1973.)
36. See, e.g. NZPD Vol. 146, 1909 pp 155-60.
CONCLUSION

The central aim of this thesis has been to illustrate and to examine the manner in which the two South Pacific Dominions of the British Empire, Australia and New Zealand, perceived and responded during the 1902-13 period to the divergence of view between themselves and the British over the identification of the potential enemies that faced the British Empire in the South Pacific and to see also how these Dominions reconciled their view with the perception that they shared with the British of their potential enemies in Europe.

Essentially the response of both Dominions to their situation was to devise defence policies which were directed towards the overall strengthening of imperial defence. By this means they were able to address both the problem of improving local defence and also that of improving the defence of the Empire at its centre.

The basic difference between the policies of Australia and New Zealand, however, was that Australia followed a path which placed the needs of that Dominion before those of the Empire as a whole. This was manifestly not the course taken by New Zealand, where the approach was in almost exactly the opposite direction.
The intention of the thesis argument with respect to the differences between the two Dominions’ defence policies has been to identify these differences and to highlight them by making comparison with British policies. The underlying reasons why Australia chose to want a semi-autonomous local navy, and why New Zealand chose to strengthen the Royal Navy by gifting first additional money and then a capital ship, have been briefly discussed throughout the body of the argument. They relate to the wider context of the history of the region since they can be seen to relate in general terms to the differences observed by historians as existing between the two Dominions in other areas. To tie the argument in to the wider context, then, it is perhaps useful to summarise the basic reasons for the differences in Dominion defence policy expression.

Financially, it was relatively straightforward for Australia to construct and maintain a small navy, as the resources to do so existed within the Dominion. The much smaller population of New Zealand and the smaller relative size of its economy would have made it much more difficult to follow suit. The principal problem facing New Zealand in such a case was that the maintenance costs of a local navy could not be sustained, even though the provision of the initial capital to provide occasional ships was possible.

Geographically, there was also an argument favouring the tendency for Australia to want a navy of its own. The Australian coastline was significantly larger than that of any of its neighbours, and its defence requirements were seen by the Australians to be correspondingly greater. Yet the British provided but one small squadron to patrol both coastlines. While a few ships could quite readily defend New Zealand waters, this was certainly not the case with Australia and hence, from this viewpoint, there
was greater incentive for the Australians to provide their own defence. New Zealand was satisfied with a relatively small increase in existing deployment.

Isolation was also a significant factor. Both Dominions felt themselves to be somewhat isolated in the South Pacific, the 'last outpost' of the 'white races' in the region. The relative smallness of New Zealand, however, emphasised this isolation by coupling it with a sense of vulnerability and helplessness. This served to strengthen ties with Britain and to wish to seek the security of imperial solidarity. The Australians, by contrast, had sufficient size and power to be able to take action of their own and hence the ties with Britain were by no means as strong.

The effect of individual personalities also cannot be discounted. The Australian proposals were influenced to a considerable extent by the ideas of Creswell, whose approach was to place Australian needs and goals considerably higher than those of the Empire as a whole. He was in part responding to the complex of factors described above in taking such an approach, but it is also evident that, at least at first, he was going considerably beyond anything that the Federal government could reasonably consider.

Similarly, the ideas of Ward had their effect on the shaping of New Zealand's defence policies. In promoting his idea of imperial federation, Ward was reflecting the ideals of the time - which, as indicated, contributed to the institution of policy in the first place - but he too went in many respects beyond that which was felt fully acceptable, as his failure to reach agreement concerning imperial federation at the 1907 Colonial Conference indicated. His defence policy represented to a certain extent an attempt to fulfil his wishes in this respect, although he was also addressing a number of other issues by taking the course that he did.
For all these reasons, then, the Australians ultimately took up a policy which placed Australia first; whereas New Zealand wished to emphasise imperial solidarity and to strengthen imperial ties and defence.

These factors relate to the wider context of the general differences between the two Dominions in two ways. Very similar factors to those given above have been attributed by historians as contributing to the differences between the two Dominions in many areas besides the expression of defence policy. In this sense then it can perhaps be said that the defence policies pursued by both Dominions during the 1902-13 period were symptomatic of the more general differences between them.

One cannot however disregard the similarities between the positions in which the two Dominions found themselves during the period. In many respects the thesis can be seen to have illustrated some close resemblances between the views held and the positions of the two Dominions at the time; to have comparatively examined an area where in many respects the two Dominions overlapped.

This is not by any means the only area in which further studies could profitably be made. Other areas which have been peripheral to the primary aim of this thesis, but which the conclusions drawn in the thesis highlight as being of considerable interest, include the relationship between Ward's approach to imperial solidarity and his internal policies within New Zealand. There are two approaches which could be taken here. The first would be to look at the 1906-12 period to determine whether Ward consciously attempted to play upon the 'jingo-patriotism' of New Zealanders in areas other than that of naval defence, in order to draw attention away from his internal policies. The second area involves an analysis of the effect that the dreadnought offer had on Ward's subsequent political career. Most biographies imply it
was used to white-wash Ward's image. Loughman's 1929 biography, for instance, written at a time when Ward's reputation was in ruins, emphasised Ward's patriotism in making the dreadnought offer, and the effect that this had exerted on the British, at the almost complete expense of such issues as Ward's bankruptcy in the 1890's, which had been the subject of a number of pamphlets printed in 1909, and which had consequently been turned into a fairly significant scandal. ¹

Other areas for further study include the nature and development of the two Dominions' relationship with the United States. The analysis contained in this thesis only briefly touched on this issue, but it is clear that if the conclusions drawn in this thesis were taken as a starting point for such an analysis, then further conclusions might be drawn which could well differ from those drawn by existing analysts.

The relationship between the argument presented in this thesis and existing historiography is complex. Thematically, the placing of both Dominions within the imperial context and the argument that their policies reflected a desire to assert themselves within the framework of the British Empire is somewhat different to the approach taken by other historians, where many of the actions of both Dominions have been interpreted as expressions of nationalism beyond the imperial structure. Ross, for instance, felt that he had ident-

¹. See Loughman pp 134-58, 211-16: also 'Unauthorised Biography of Sir Joseph Ward, Premier of New Zealand' (2 parts, James Black, Pub., Wellington 1909), Anon but possibly written by R.F.Way or James Black: Barclay: and also 'Dastardly Attack on Sir Joseph Ward' (N.Z. Times Co. Ltd for the Progressive Liberal League of New Zealand, Wellington 1909), assembled by various members of the Liberal party. Although the claims in Ward's 'Unauthorised Biography' about his career were scandalous he could do no more than downplay the issue because what had been said simply exaggerated the truth, which although submerged by his later activities was still widely known.
ified an actual colonial policy which New Zealand had evidently followed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. 2

On a more specific level, some of the particular assertions made by other historians have been disputed by some of the arguments presented in this thesis. Amry and Mary Belle Vanderbosch, for instance, suggested in their brief summary of Australian defence during the period that the perception of the Japanese threat 'concerned Australians and increased rather than diminished their reliance upon Britain'. 3 But the argument of this thesis, looking at the period in somewhat greater detail, has made clear that the Japanese 'threat' in fact decreased Australian reliance upon Britain, in favour of an improved naval defence provided by the Australians themselves.

Similarly, in the case of New Zealand, historians such as Meaney, Howard and Weir have argued that New Zealand's actions in providing such gifts as a dreadnought were spurred mainly by patriotic desires to aid Britain in time of crisis. This was not, according to the argument of this thesis, actually the case, but rather the patriotism was but one of a number of factors underlying the actions of the Dominion.

Looking at the historiography of the period in relation to the argument of this thesis, it can perhaps be said that differences of opinion are inevitable given the fact that the issues treated in this thesis have not received direct attention in writings elsewhere. Rather, they have formed part of the background or a secondary line of argument, and hence given the practical

2. Ross p 289.
limitations to research have not received the detailed treatment which allows a completely in-depth analysis to be made. This is a problem which is perhaps inherent in all historical writing.

To return finally to the central issue of the thesis, it can perhaps be said that, although Australia and New Zealand took quite different approaches to the problems of imperial defence in their region, and although the Australians and later the New Zealanders ran into some difficulty with the Admiralty over the execution of their policies, it is nevertheless clear from the actions that both Dominions took, that they were as one with the British in the manner in which they acted to face their perceived enemies, a manner which was, as Fisher so aptly put it, characterised by 'INSTANT READINESS FOR WAR'\textsuperscript{4}. 

\textsuperscript{4} F.P. I p 17.
APPENDICES

(1) The Naming of HMS New Zealand.

(2) Evaluation of HMS New Zealand as a fighting ship.
APPENDIX ONE

THE NAMING OF HMS NEW ZEALAND

As discussed in the text, the Admiralty showed a considerable willingness to accommodate the desires of the New Zealand government with regard to the naming of their gift-ship, even to the point where some of the normal prerogatives of the Admiralty were waived. The procedure that was followed is perhaps worth recording as it illustrates the kind of matter in which the Admiralty was more than willing to grant leeway.

The obvious name for the vessel was HMS New Zealand. However, when the offer was accepted, this name was already in use, having been given to a pre-dreadnought battleship of the King Edward class completed in 1905.¹ In May 1910, after the gift vessel was laid down, Ward telegraphed Hall-Jones and requested him to suggest to McKenna the name Zealandia and to telegraph the name back so there could be no mistake.

¹. Jane's 1914 p 47. The names of these ships, with the exception of the King Edward VII were intended to reflect an Imperial flavour by commemorating the names of some of the Colonies and Dominions.
Hall-Jones complied. McKenna did not reply for nearly a month, but then on June 17th wrote to Hall-Jones suggesting that, since the Australians had just selected the name of their Commonwealth for their own battlecruiser, then it would be fitting for the New Zealand government to do the same. Re-naming the existing battle-ship would prove no problem, and McKenna suggested Wellington 'as this is a name which has been used in the Royal Navy previously and at the same time the Dominion would retain her double-link with the Royal Navy'.

Hall-Jones cabled the information to Ward, who agreed, but suggested that the earlier ship should be named Maori. It transpired, however, that this name had already been given to a 'Tribal' class destroyer, and a double-change would thus be involved should this name be selected for the pre-dreadnought. This was not acceptable to McKenna, but as Ward had no new name to suggest, McKenna proposed leaving the matter in abeyance for twelve months.

But at the end of the year, McKenna, having evidently forgotten this arrangement, wrote to Hall-Jones to the effect that he was considering the name Caledonia for the earlier battleship, as this kept the imperial theme running through all the names of the class, in the absence of any better suggestion from Ward. Hall-Jones replied to remind him of the earlier agreement, and suggested that as Ward was on his way to England, perhaps the matter could be deferred until discussions could be held. McKenna agreed.

Some resolution to the matter was, however, now becoming

2. WArc IA Series 71/1, 1913/661, Parts I-IV.
necessary since there were now officially two ships with the name *HMS New Zealand* on the Navy lists, and no standardised means of differentiating between the two had been devised. The gift ship was referred to variously as *HMS New Zealand (C)*; 'The New Zealand Armoured Cruiser; or 'The New Zealand Battlecruiser', none of which were particularly satisfactory.

But despite this requirement, the final selection of a name for the earlier battleship did not take place until nearly a year after Ward's meeting with McKenna. In November 1911, Hall-Jones was finally able to report to Ward that the name *Zealandia* had been selected for the old battleship. The irony of this solution was that it merely swapped the names that had originally been suggested for the two vessels.

What is clear, however, is that the process of selection had been quite protracted, and that this had been in part because the Admiralty had decided voluntarily to abrogate its own normal rights; the battleship over which much of the discussion devolved had in fact no connection beyond name with the Dominion, and to allow Ward a say in the selection of the name represented in reality merely an extension of courtesy.

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3. WARC IA Series 71/1, 1913/661, Parts I-IV.
APPENDIX TWO

EVALUATION OF HMS NEW ZEALAND

AS A FIGHTING SHIP

Some discussion has been made in the text of the fact that both the Australian and New Zealand governments purchased vessels to express their respective dreadnought offers which were not in fact ships of the latest type. As discussed, this was not of any great significance as far as the anticipated role of the vessels was concerned, since in the Pacific they would be unlikely to meet any ships of equal gun-power. However, in 1912, HMS New Zealand was re-deployed into the North Sea, and the arguments which had in 1909 led to that design being superseded by a more heavily armed and armoured vessel thus applied. (It is relevant to note here that the Australia followed suit in 1915).

The principal problem with the employment of the Indefatigables in a situation where they might well enter a battle-line was their lack of armour. The scale of their armour protection was no better than that of the Defence class of armoured cruisers which dated to 1905, and which had been designed only with 8.2-inch or lighter calibre fire in mind. There were also
a number of serious weaknesses in the distribution of the armour on the battlecruisers, due in part to the speed with which the designs had to be prepared, and in part to faulty concepts of the manner in which this protection should have been distributed.

This armour protection was, as discussed, known to be inadequate at the time, and most reference works since have commented on its weakness. Parkes was perhaps the most explicit when he remarked that 'however well these ships might be fought...second rate protection made their employment in the battle line a hazardous risk'.

The uneasiness of those such as Jellicoe over the inadequate protection of the Indefatigables and their predecessors the Invincibles (whose armour protection was virtually identical) was tragically justified at the Battle of Jutland on May 31st 1916, when the Indefatigable blew up after only fifteen minutes under fire from the Von der Tann: and the Invincible suffered the same fate when she entered the battle somewhat later on, at the hands of the Lutzow. While inadequate flash-precautions have been cited as the probable cause of the devastating magazine explosions which sank both these vessels and the modified Lion class battlecruiser Queen Mary, it is not inconceivable in the case of the two earlier ships that their destruction resulted from a direct failure of the armour. As Campbell noted, the Indefatigable sank after a heavy explosion aft, prior to which hits had been observed on her deck abaft 'X' turret, beyond which the barbette armour was only three inches thick. The Invincible was blown in two when her midships magazines exploded, following hits amidships in an

1. Parkes p 515.
2. Campbell p 18.
area where, as observed with regard to her sister ship Indomitable by at least some of that vessel's crew, only a 1-inch armoured grating was present to prevent shells from plunging directly into the magazines.  

Perhaps fortunately, HMS New Zealand was hit only once during the battle, by an 11-inch shell which knocked some of the armour plate off 'X' turret, and this represented the only damage that she received during her entire career.

In most other respects, however, the design of the Indefatigables was satisfactory even in the un-planned use of the ships in the battle line. The main armament of eight twelve inch guns in four twin turrets compared well with anything that was mounted by the German battlecruisers that the ships had to fight during the war, and while the arrangement of this armament was not entirely adequate - full eight gun broadside fire was possible only over a narrow arc abaft the beam - this made little practical difference to the fighting power of the ships since, in most instances, salvoes of more than four or six guns were uncommon unless the range was known precisely.

The one area in which the Indefatigables excelled was that of speed. They had been designed with machinery of 43,000 horsepower for a speed of 25 knots. Machinery of 44,000 horsepower was fitted to HMS New Zealand. In service, however, much higher horsepowers were regularly attained. At the Dogger Bank battle of 1915, for instance, the New Zealand was worked up to 316 rpm

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4. German battlecruisers of the Derfflinger class mounted eight twelve-inch. While designs for 14- and 15-inch gunned ships existed, and five had been laid down by mid 1916, none were ever completed due to a shortage of steel. Campbell pp 49, 58.
and sustained this for more than two hours during the general chase. This corresponded to a speed of 27 knots and a developed horsepower of some 65,250 - nearly a third more than the machinery had originally been designed to produce.\(^5\) This ability to exceed the designed speed was perhaps fortunate, since by the First World War the kinds of speeds at which battlecruisers were expected to operate were several knots higher than the 24-25 knots envisaged in 1904.\(^6\)

It has widely been reported that both 'Colonial' class battlecruisers were scrapped in the early 1920's in accordance with the Washington Treaty of 1923. But while this was the case with HMS Australia, which was returned to Australian hands after the war, the New Zealand was scrapped in March 1922, months before the negotiations in Washington had even begun, and after lying idle at Rosyth for nearly two years.\(^7\) In the environment of the post-war arms-race (which Washington halted) where battlecruisers were characterised by the Japanese Amagis, the American Lexingtoms and the gargantuan British 'G3' design - which was armoured far more heavily even than contemporary battleships - the fighting value of the surviving Indefatigables had dwindled to the point where to keep the New Zealand was no longer of any use.

\(^5\) Campbell p 18.


\(^7\) HMS New Zealand, Ship's Book.
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