

THE NAVY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

STRIKING testimony to the service which could have been rendered by a Canadian navy, if there had been such a navy in existence at the outbreak of the War, was heard recently from no less an authority than Premier Borden himself. Speaking at a public meeting at London, Ont., September 28th, Sir Robert Borden, in the course of a fine tribute to the work of the British navy since the War began, said:

"But in the days before the ultimate destination of such of the German fleet as was on the high seas was known, before the disaster in the South Atlantic had been avenged in the battle off the Falkland Islands, Canadians knew anxiety. It was not known whether the German fleet was making its way to the Northern Pacific to strike at the coast of our country.

"All that we had at that time to defend our Pacific coast was one Japanese ship, one British cruiser, one Canadian training ship, manned, I am proud to say, by young Canadians taken in most cases from the ordinary walks of life, and two Canadian submarines, also manned by Canadians, who had cheerfully responded to the call when it was made."

In view of this authoritative acknowledgement of the need of naval protection in home waters when War came, and the no less authoritative acknowledgement of the service rendered by what little in the way of a navy Canada had at that time, thanks chiefly to the wrecking of the Canadian Naval policy by the Nationalist-Conservatives, it may not be out of place to recall what that policy would have provided in the way of protection.

Laurier Naval Policy Would Have Provided 15 Ships Afloat To-day.

The Laurier Naval policy would have given to Canada in 1914 one big cruiser of the "Bristol" class and two torpedo-boat destroyers of the approved "Acorn" type, in addition to the cruisers Niobe and Rainbow and the other smaller war craft in existence as part of the Canadian Navy for patrol service; also there could have been six submarines which it has since been demonstrated could be built in Canada in very short time and which would certainly have been built as submarines had become so important an arm of the British naval service. To-day, there would have been still another big cruiser and at least one more destroyer, even if the emergency of war had not hurried construction and provided more than these.

The official records show that the preliminary advertisement for tenders for vessels for the Canadian Navy was published in July, 1910. No less than 19 firms replied to this preliminary advertisement. As certain qualifications were required, only 13 of these firms were approved, and further restrictions brought down to 10 the number of firms who were supplied with specifications. Of these, seven actually sub-

mitted tenders according to the specifications and accompanied with certified cheques for the usual guarantee deposit.

Four Cruisers, Six Destroyers.

The official letter calling for tenders, dated February 4, 1911, and signed by G. J. Desbarats, Deputy Minister of the Naval Service, specified:

"Four vessels of the "Bristol" class of the improved "Weymouth" type and 6 torpedo-boat destroyers of the river class of the improved "Acorn" type, are required to be built in accordance with the requirements laid down in the accompanying contract."

"As stated in the condition laid down in the first schedule, the delivery of the first cruiser is required in 3 years from the date of the signing of the contract, and a subsequent cruiser each following year.

"Two torpedo-boat destroyers are to be delivered in 3 years from the date of signing of the contract and an additional destroyer at the end of each subsequent nine months. The whole programme is to be completed within 6 years of the signing of the contract.

Must be Built in Canada.

"The conditions involve the building of the vessels in Canada and the firm who undertakes the contract must guarantee to establish and equip a shipbuilding and engineering yard in Canada to undertake the work in accordance with the conditions embodied in the contract documents forwarded." May 1st, 1911, was set as the last day for the receiving of tenders.

Seven firms guaranteed Delivery on time.

Seven responsible firms submitted tenders in accordance with these conditions.

Tender No. 1, agreed to the contract time limit, and while not specifying the place for its plant in Canada, agreed to build in Canada a plant the cost of which they estimated at between \$1,250,000 and \$1,500,000.

Tender No. 2, also agreed to the time limit and undertook to build at Sydney, Nova Scotia, the necessary equipment, including a dock 1000 feet in length, 110 feet in width, with a depth over the sill at high water of 40 feet. This tender offered to accept contract for one cruiser and two destroyers, and others as ordered, but if given the whole contract guaranteed to deliver one cruiser complete inside two years and subsequent cruisers yearly.

Tender No. 3, agreed absolutely to the time limit and named St. John, N.B. as the place at which its plant would be built if it was awarded the contract.

Tender No. 4, agreed to the time limit and stated that if the contract was secured, arrangements had been made to re-open the old Royal Naval Arsenal