

ed that immediate action was necessary. There were two courses open to us. We could have laid down three extra ships in place of the three Canadians, and made them additional to our existing and prospective programme. We could do so still, but it is not at present clear that this step, which should have meant the addition of £8,500,000 to the naval estimates, spread over the next two or three years, is necessary, and it certainly ought not to be taken unless it is necessary. Although the Canadian Naval Aid Bill has been rejected, the question of Canada taking an effective part in her own defence and in that of the British Empire is by no means dead."

Britain Left to Face Emergencies Unaided.

After giving his reason for this he went on to say, "that we have no right to assume at the present time that we are to be left to face the emergencies of the future unaided, and left to bear the whole burden alone. That being so, the Admiralty have recommended, and the Cabinet have approved, the adoption of the temporary expedient. We are proceeding, not by increasing the programme of capital ships, but by accelerations in the construction of those which have already been sanctioned in such a way as to secure the requisite strength we require at the periods involved. We have, therefore, accelerated three ships in this year's programme which would not otherwise have been taken till the end of the year. We invited tenders for them last month, action has already been taken, tenders have already been received, and these vessels will be ready, if all goes well, by the third quarter 1915. They will fully maintain, in the absence of new Austrian or Italian construction, those margins of Mediterranean and whole-world strength which I explained were necessary in the second speech I addressed to the Committee on the introduction of the March Estimates. Of course, the relief which is given