

the chair. As a result of this Conference an agreement was come to as respects Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the obligations they were to assume. Canada and Australia were to begin the organisation of Naval services of their own, New Zealand to contribute to the British Navy, on condition of British ships being placed in her waters.

When the Ministers who attended the Conference on Imperial and naval defence returned from England in the fall of 1909, a bill for the creation of a Canadian Naval Service was immediately prepared by the Government with the aid of Admiralty experts and submitted to parliament at its next session.

After considerable discussion, it received the Royal assent on March 4, 1910 and passed into law as "The Act respecting the Naval Service of Canada."

How the Naval Question was dragged into Party Politics.

Mr. Foster's motion respecting the defence of Canadian coasts and trade routes was introduced, as has been mentioned, on March 20th, 1909. The resolution as finally adopted was passed during the evening of the same day. The discussion in parliament was therefore, brief. Case, however, the Laurier Administration began to give effect to the resolution, and it became apparent that it was to mean something more than a pious expression of goodwill on the part of Canada towards the Mother Country, popular agitation was started in the country against it. In the Province of Quebec especially, attention was drawn to what was looked upon as a new departure, and exaggerated and alarmist statements as to what it might involve were widely circulated. It soon became apparent that naval expenditure, like increased expenditure on the militia, was not likely to meet with ready acceptance on the part of the people of the Dominion, and that a government undertaking the carrying out of a permanent policy in this connection was certain to incur great political risks. On the other hand, the growing sense of national self-respect was felt to demand that something be done which would relieve Canada of the reproach that notwithstanding her position among the outlying Dominions and her great development, she was prepared to rest for her security in a position of dependence upon the Mother land, at a time when the burden of sea defence was beginning to weigh heavily upon the tax payers of the British Isles. It was known, too, that a strong patriotic sentiment could be easily aroused whenever it could be made to appear, as was true in the case of the South African war, that the Mother country was in real need of assistance.

With this knowledge of the situation, the leaders of the Conservative party decided to turn to their party advantage the difficult position in which the Laurier Government had been placed in consequence of its endeavours to give effect to the unanimous resolution of parliament. Indifferent to the demands of a disinterested patriotism, they decided to drag the question of naval defence into the realm of contentious party politics, to reap a party advantage wholly regardless of its effect upon national honour or duty, or the larger "imperial claims" to which in their speeches, they were so