

THE ADMIRALTY MEMORANDUM.

During the introduction in the House of Commons on Dec. 5th, 1912, of his bill to authorize the expenditure of \$35,000,000 towards a gift to the British Admiralty of the three most powerful battleships in the world, the Right Honourable R. L. Borden, the Prime Minister, read from a Memorandum prepared by the British Admiralty at Mr. Borden's request on the general Naval situation, which, in answer to a specific question put by Mr. Borden to the Admiralty, concludes by stating that after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances it is desirable that any immediate aid that Canada might give should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war. This Memorandum is being made to serve the purpose in public discussion of conveying the impression that an emergency exists, and is being interpreted as a request, or an expressed preference, on the part of the British Admiralty, for the presentation by Canada of dreadnoughts to the Mother Country. In point of fact, the Memorandum contains nothing to justify the view that, in the opinion of the Admiralty, an emergency exists, or that the British Government either desires or expects a contribution of the kind Mr. Borden proposes. An analysis of the document will show that it carefully avoids all expressions of opinion. The facts, it discloses, however, afford ample grounds for believing that had a free expression of opinion been granted the Home Government as to the best course for Canada to pursue, the opinion expressed would have been in entire accord with the unanimous resolution of the House of Commons of Canada of March, 1909, and the present proposals of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party.

The quotations which follow and which are taken from the Memorandum speak for themselves:—

THE MEMORANDUM LEAVES CHOICE OF METHODS SOLELY TO CANADA.

The Memorandum was not presented by the Admiralty to Mr. Borden, but was prepared by the Admiralty in compliance with a request of Mr. Borden. The letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to H.R.H. the Governor-General transmitting the Memorandum is sufficient evidence of this. It is as follows:—

"Downing Street, 25th Oct., 1912."

"Sir:

1. I have the honour to transmit to Your Royal Highness the accompanying copy of a memorandum relating to the requirements of the Naval Defence of the Empire.

"2. *This document has been prepared by the Admiralty on the instruction of His Majesty's Government in compliance with the request of Mr. Borden with a view to presentation to the Dominion Parliament if, and when, the Dominion Ministers deem it necessary.*

I have, etc.,

L. HARCOURT."