

crisis, subject to approval by Parliament. An initial appropriation of \$10,000,000 was proposed.

After a great deal of debate the bill was passed. Tenders for the construction of the proposed ships were called for. To serve until the new ships were built, two old cruisers were purchased from the British government: the "Niobe" of 11,000 tons, commissioned in 1899, and the smaller "Rainbow", of 3,600 tons, commissioned in 1892. The dockyards at Halifax and Esquimalt were transferred from the British government to the Canadian government for use by the new navy. Thus the Royal Canadian Navy first came into existence.

Rear-Admiral C.E. (later Sir Charles) Kingsmill, R.N., who had been lent to Canada during preliminary negotiations with the British Government, became Director of Naval Service for Canada.

At the Imperial Conference of 1911 a three-way agreement on naval defence was reached between the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. The Royal Navy agreed to provide the necessary personnel for administration and instruction duties, including the staffing of a training establishment for officers. The naval services and forces of each country were to be under the control of their own government, but training and discipline were to be uniform with that of the fleet of the United Kingdom, and officers and men might be interchanged. Canadian and Australian navies were to have their own naval stations, the limits of which were defined. In time of war, naval services of a Dominion which had been put at the disposal of the Imperial Government were to form an integral part of the British fleet and to remain under the control of the Admiralty for the duration of the war.

The Royal Canadian Naval College was founded at Halifax, in 1911. It was shifted temporarily to the Royal Military College at Kingston in 1917 after the great explosion in Halifax, and the following year moved again to Esquimalt on the west coast.

In 1911 the Laurier Government went out of office on the issue of reciprocity, and naval defence was allowed again to sink into the background. The Naval Service Act remained on the statute books, but nothing was done to implement it.

Although a number of tenders had been received to build the new Canadian warships, no tender was taken up, and the naval shipbuilding program never began.

#### Naval Aid Bill

Conservative policy on the question of naval defence differed from the Liberal. Laurier's idea had been that a distinct Royal Canadian Navy should be built. He felt that this program was consistent with his policy of Canadian nationalism. The Conservatives on the other hand felt that Canadian contributions to the Imperial Navy would be more suitable. The Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, in December 1912 introduced a Naval Aid Bill to provide \$35,000,000 to pay for three battleships for the British Navy. These ships were to be returned to Canada if it ever decided to build a navy of its own. After long debate, the bill was forced through the House of Commons in April, 1913, by closure, but was thrown out by the Liberal majority in the Senate.

Meanwhile the Niobe and the Rainbow were allowed to become inactive. Recruiting (with the ships in dock) ceased, and the navy was pretty well forgotten.