

navies under local control in time of peace, led to a tentative agreement that Great Britain was to supply two units and Australia one, for a proposed Pacific Fleet, and New Zealand was to build a dreadnought for the China unit. Canada, because of her double seaboard, was to build cruisers and destroyers.¹

Australia and New Zealand proceeded at once to carry out their part of the agreement, and their ships helped to round up German cruisers in 1914. Great Britain for some unexplained reason failed to establish her two units in the Pacific. Canada had only begun her fleet, when the Liberal Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier went out of power in 1911.

London, 1911.—The period between 1909 and 1911 was one of continued anxiety for the British people. The Liberal programme of social reform had involved the Asquith Government in a bitter struggle with the House of Lords, which culminated in the Parliament Act of 1911. The imperialists of Great Britain were much concerned about the naval policies of Canada and Australia, which were laying the foundations of local navies. Abroad the situation was still threatening. Germany had been practically defeated at the Algeciras Conference, but she continued to increase her navy, and was certain to assert herself at the next favourable opportunity, which, indeed, came in July 1911, just after the close of the 1911 conference. On that occasion she sent the gunboat Panther to the port of Agadir, and thereby interfered once more in the question of Morocco. Other countries also were making warlike preparations. Anxious to be prepared for emergencies, they were spending so much money on their navies that the total expenditure of the seven Great Powers of the world on their navies for the year 1911 was \$629,045,000, an increase of \$251,451,000 over the total expenditure of 1901. It was under these circumstances that the regular quadrennial Imperial Conference was held in London in May and June 1911.

Great Britain was represented by her Premier, Hon. H. H. Asquith, who acted as chairman, and Hon. Lewis Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies. Canada was represented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir F. W. Borden and Hon. L. P. Brodeur. Of the other members of the Conference the more prominent were Mr. Fisher of Australia, Sir Joseph Ward of New Zealand, and General Botha of the new Union of South Africa. Mr. Asquith, in his opening address, reviewed the peculiarities of the British Empire, dwelt on the advantages of the periodical conference at which "we may take free counsel together in the matters which concern us all", and then emphasized the importance of flexibility in the constitution of the Empire. "I am sure we shall not lose sight of

¹ Canadian Official Report of the Conference, Sessional Paper 29a, A1910.