

The result is a plan for so organizing the forces of the Crown, wherever they are, that while preserving the complete autonomy of each Dominion, should the Dominion desire to assist in the defence of the empire in a real emergency their forces could be rapidly combined into one homogeneous imperial army.

It is no more the thin red line that stood before Sebastopol. It is no more the mixed ranks that fought at Waterloo, taken from England, Ireland and Scotland, it is no more the Highland brigade, or Sir Henry Havelock's forces engaged in the relief of Lucknow. It is the imperial forces of the Empire, under the stimulus of the vigorous climate of the northern zone, under the southern cross or wherever they are being mobilized, being consolidated into a sympathetic force for the imperial army. That is the result of the conference, so far as Mr. Asquith's statement goes, for military purposes. But the conference went further he says, and did suggest an organization with a naval force with this proviso, which you will be kind enough to notice is of the utmost importance. He says notwithstanding what these organizations may be :

It follows that all resolutions come to and the proposals approved by the conference which has been held must be taken, so far as the delegates of the Dominion are concerned, to be ad referendum, and to have no binding force unless and until submitted to the various parliaments.

Whatever the conference had done is subject to the approval of parliament. We are delighted to know that Mr. Asquith recognizes fully our Canadian autonomy in that respect. The conference agreed as to some general scheme for naval defence. There would be a Pacific fleet in three sections, one to defend or surround Australia, another in the China seas and another in the East Indies. In regard to New Zealand's offer of a Dreadnought which is to cost £2,000,000, it has been accepted, and the peace of the Indian seas and the China seas will be preserved hereafter, not by the British fleet alone, but by the assistance of the colony of New Zealand. The Commonwealth of Australia is practically to provide for her own defence. That is to say, she is to be a unit in the Pacific ocean, and her complement is to

consist of one armoured cruiser of the Indomitable class, three armoured cruisers of the Bristol class and six destroyers, with the necessary complement of submarines. For the time being officers and men are to be loaned by the imperial authorities, but the country aims at eventually furnishing its own crews. To this end training colleges will be established. Sydney probably will be the chief basis of the fleet's operations. Its annual cost is estimated at \$3,750,000.

As regards Australia, the suggested arrangement is that, with some temporary assistance from imperial funds, the Commonwealth government should provide and maintain the Australian unit of the Pacific fleet. The contribution of the New Zealand government would be applied towards the maintenance of the China unit, of which some of the smaller vessels would have New Zealand waters as their headquarters. The New Zealand armoured cruisers would be stationed in China waters. As regards Canada, it was considered that her double sea-board rendered the provision of a fleet unit of the same kind unsuitable for the present. It was proposed, according to the amount of money that might be available, that Canada should make a start with cruisers of the Bristol class and destroyers of an improved river class, a part to be stationed on the Atlantic sea-board and a part on the Pacific.

That is the outline of the conference, so far as the Premier of Great Britain has given any expression to its conclusion. What conclusion the Dominion government may have come to will be known when the Bill is brought down. I refer to this as a sort of partial preparation for what may be expected when we go a little further. Let us not lose sight of the fact that this was a most important conference, that Canada was represented there, that a scheme of military defence for the empire has been approved by the conference, so far as Canada is concerned, subject to our approval, that a scheme of naval defence was approved subject to our approval, and that all of these matters, whatever they are no matter what they involve, should be subject to the approval of the Canadian parliament as they ought to be. If we have the right to negotiate our own treaties, we have a right to indicate how our money ought to be spent, we ought to have a right to indicate the amount of that expenditure. Then you may very properly ask me what, in my opinion, Canada should pay, if I