

111

A law was placed on the Statute Books providing for the construction of Cruisers, Submarines, and Destroyers which were to be built in shipyards on our Atlantic and Pacific sea board, by British firms. Two training ships, H.M.C.S. Niobe, and H.M.C.S. Rainbow were provided at once; Naval Colleges were put in being, and tenders for the building of ships were called for.

Unfortunately for Canada, and Sir Wilfred Laurier, and his party, this admirable plan was made an election issue, and was coupled with a reciprocity pact with the United States, this fanned into fury the overwhelming majority of our people, who led by the conservatives saw in the measures the thin end of the wedge that was to cleave separation from the Motherland, and the stepping stone to dread annexation itself.

Sir Wilfred and his party received the most crushing defeat at this election that any Government has ever received in this country.

On the Conservatives taking power in 1911 the first thing they did was to remove the laws from the Statute Books, providing for the establishment of a navy. Dismantle the training ships; return the eleven tenders that had been received; and close the Naval College at Esquimalt. As was to be expected the ideas of the Conservative party in the matter of Naval Defence did not coincide with those of their predecessors. Time has shown which was the right plan