

Months before the Laurier Government called for tenders, two Australian destroyers were guarding the harbours of Australia, and the hammers were ringing on the New Zealand battle-cruiser. While the ships of Australia and New Zealand were patrolling the Pacific, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Ministers sought to make petty political capital by promising to build their ships, first at St. John, N.B., then at Halifax, at Montreal, at Sydney and at Quebec.

The Australians and the New Zealanders meant business, and were resolved to do their duty to the Motherland, but Canada's navy was meant for political, and not for naval warfare.

To make a long and miserable story short, this is what the Laurier Government did to provide the country with sea defence. It agreed on a General Policy which laid down the following principles:—

### What They Agreed To.

1. Regular and periodical contributions to the British navy are regarded as inadvisable.
2. But special contributions to the British navy, to meet special circumstances, are approved.
3. Canada should organize a naval force which should:—
  - (a) Be on lines suggested by the Admiralty.
  - (b) In time of war be under one command with the Imperial navy.
4. This force was to be organized speedily.

### What They Actually Did.

The Special Policy which the Laurier Government devised to carry out this General Policy presented the following features:—

1. It made no provision for the immediate needs of the naval defence of the Empire.
2. It rejected the advice of the Admiralty.
3. It provided for a force which should not be under the one Imperial command in time of war unless or until the Government of Canada should pass a special order-in-council. This was advocated in separatist language by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and several of his followers.
4. The Government dawdled about organizing the forces:—
  - (a) It mismanaged the recruiting of men.
  - (b) It did not order the ships. It did not even call for tenders till the Australians and New Zealanders had made substantial progress with their programmes. It had the tenders before it for the whole of May, June and July, 1911, without ordering the vessels, though it did not contemplate an election until the very end of July, 1911.

### A Separatist Policy.

We have seen how Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Government, year after year, steadily and brazenly refused to render naval assistance of any kind to the Motherland; how at last it was forced to take action by public sentiment; how it refused to co-operate with the other Dominions in the creation of a Pacific squadron; how it disregarded the advice of the Admiralty; how it refused to provide a fleet unit; how it paltered with the small cheap force it grudgingly consented to give. Fir