

A Visit to H.M.S. Hood

Yesterday the City press representatives were enabled to pay a visit to the flagship of the Special Service Squadron, H.M.S. Hood, and had the privilege of an interview with Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Field, the officer commanding.

Embarking in the ship's launch at Topsail pier, the party were quickly conveyed on board, and were met by Admiral Field's Naval Secretary, Paymaster Commander Frank L. Horsey, O.B.E., D.S.C., who readily furnished the visitors with all kinds of information regarding the Squadron, the object of the cruise, their experiences during the world tour, and all the other hundred and one matters upon which information was sought.

First a word as to the general impression given by the great grey monster which has dropped her anchor in Conception Bay. She lies, in company with the Repulse and Adelaide, about two miles from Topsail pier, and about midway between the mouth of Manuels River, and Kelly's Island. The distance from the shore makes it impossible for one to form any conception of the Hood's size, and it is only when the launch approached that her huge dimensions could be appreciated.

Amidships she towers high above the water, but forward and aft she appears to be surprisingly low. But think of what lies beneath the surface! She draws 34 feet of water, her beam is 104 feet, and she is 860 feet in length. It seems almost inconceivable that such a huge bulk could possibly tear through the water at the rate of 35 miles an hour! More impressive, perhaps, than any other part of the ship at first glance are those wonderful 15-inch guns, silent now and resplendent in their paint and polished brass and steel, but it does not require a vivid imagination to picture them suddenly leaping into life and flinging their 14 cwt. projectiles at a target invisible to the human eye, twenty miles away. The cost of this great war machine was approximately \$35,000,000, and her maintenance amounts to about \$2,750,000 annually. She can develop about 157,000 horsepower, and her complement of officers and men is 1,500.

Her fuel consists of 4,000 tons of oil and fifty tons of coal. She is driven through the water by four propellers, each of which is 17 ft. in diameter. The main shafts are 300 feet long, and each of them weighs about 100 tons. The links of her cable are made of 3 1/2 inch bar iron and the anchor is 9 1/2 tons. Some idea of her size may be formed when it is realized that her painted surface is said to be about eleven acres. In a word she is the largest ship afloat, and is the latest in design and armament in naval construction.

The Interview With The Admiral.

Ushered into the Admiral's quarters, the Press representatives were warmly welcomed by Sir Frederick Field, who described the 36,000 mile cruise which the squadron had made during its tour of the Empire, since November 27th, 1923. He expressed his gratification at the wonderful reception tendered the fleet everywhere, and referred with the greatest enthusiasm, to the interest the various Dominions were taking in the work of the Navy and their realization of the necessity for its maintenance in order to keep the Empire intact.

During the tour, certain questions had invariably been asked relative to naval matters in connection with the Empire, and in order to furnish the fullest information to the public on questions in which they are particularly interested, Admiral Field has drawn up the following questions and answers for purposes of publication:

1. What is the capital cost of Great Britain's existing navy?
2. It is most difficult to give an accurate estimate of the capital cost of the Royal Navy as it stands at the present time. The navy not only comprises all the ships afloat, but it includes a large number of depot ships, training ships and shore establishments. In any estimate of the cost of the navy a very large item would consist of the dockyards at home and abroad, the fueling stations and floating docks; (to mention only a few of the many appurtenances of a fleet in being). At a very rough estimate the original cost of the ships alone at the present time is in the neighborhood of at least £280,000,000. The dockyards and other establishments have been gradually built up in the course of years and it is quite impossible to give even an approximate estimate of what their total value is, other than that the figure would be a very large one.
3. What is the total contemplated outlay, per annum, for the next five years, and what is the present annual maintenance?

The Navy Estimates for 1924-25 amount to a total sum of £55,800,000. Included in this total are both the costs of maintenance and of new construction, and so far as can be seen having regard to the fact that it will be necessary to replace ships as they become obsolete, it is practically certain that it will not be possible to reduce this figure for the next few years. Apart from the cost of maintenance of the fleet and shore establishments there must be classified under the heading "maintenance" all non-effective services; e.g. pensions to officers and men, gratuities and compensation allowances. The cost of new construction during 1924-25 is approximately £28,000,000 which, if deducted from the total Navy Estimates for this year, gives an expenditure on maintenance of about £27,800,000.

Can England continue to carry this load?

As is well known, the present situation in England is that there are over one million people unemployed, and the National Debt of Great Britain amounts to over six thousand millions of pounds sterling. It will be readily understood that, having regard to the necessity for meeting interest and sinking fund in respect of this debt and the urgent need for expenditure on peaceful reconstruction in other directions viz. on housing, education, roads, etc., the Government naturally only approve such expenditure on armaments as is absolutely essential to the safety of the Empire. However heavy the burden, the expenditure on naval defence, which amounts to nearly 3% per head per annum, must be borne if the security of the Empire is to be maintained. Any increased weight that the Dominions are able to shoulder will reduce the burden which has to be borne by the mother country.

Should Overseas Dominions, directly or indirectly contribute, and why?

The interests and prosperity of the Empire as a whole entirely depends on its power to keep open its trade routes in the event of war. This is every bit as important to the Overseas Dominions as it is to the Mother country because the cutting of the trade routes, which are the arteries of the Empire, would result in the isolation of and disaster to the countries whose communications were severed. The Empire must be regarded as a whole, for, if any one of its component parts is isolated, it will affect the trade and supplies of all the others. The prosperity and existence of a Sea Empire rest on its sea communications just as the economic prosperity of the countries in a large continent, such as Europe, depend on good and uninterrupted railway communication. The Dominions who now contribute to the naval defence of the Empire do so in the following way and this is generally accepted as the most satisfactory method. The money which they vote for this purpose is expended solely on ships which are their own property and under their own control and only in the event of war would these ships be placed under the sole direction of the Admiralty; e.g. Australia pays for her own ships and also mans them, as far as possible, with Australian officers and men, bearing the whole cost of maintenance. In New Zealand the present system, that ships are lent from the Imperial Navy, but the cost of maintenance is borne entirely by the New Zealand Government.

What percentage of the total cost should they contribute, and on what is this percentage based?

A Dominion can contribute towards the naval defence of the Empire in the following ways:—

- (i) Provision and maintenance of local defence forces.
- (ii) Maintenance of sea-going vessels lent by the Imperial Government.
- (iii) Provision of a sea-going squadron, to take over the protection of its own trade routes.

The extent to which a Dominion contributes in these ways is a matter entirely for Dominion governments to decide and must depend on their capacity to do so, having regard to such factors as national wealth, population and volume of sea-borne trade.

Popular opinion is that the capital ships will be replaced by submarine and aircraft. Is this impression correct?

I disagree entirely with this view. Take the case of the submarine. If a naval power decides to maintain submarines only, the opposing power can very easily and at small expense construct a number of high speed shallow draft anti submarine vessels, fitted with the latest detective apparatus and special offensive weapons against submarines. In this way it can practically limit the operations of the submarine to a comparatively innocuous range.

A power putting its trust in submarines would then be compelled, if it hoped to succeed at all, to build or acquire a type of surface vessel larger and with greater offensive powers than its opponent possessed, in order to drive off the anti-submarine craft and enable its own submarine to operate. Thus the process would continue until ultimately you would

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get to a large surface vessel possessing the maximum offensive power which is necessary to support a lighter craft.

With regard to airplanes, it has been stated that Great Britain can be bombed into submission in a week. It is quite evident, then, in our waters it is absolutely necessary that we should have an adequate air force to protect those parts of the Empire which are open to attack from this weapon, or, in other words, are within a radius of action of aircraft that may be hostile.

The radius of bombing aircraft, is at the present day limited to about 200 miles and it is only necessary to describe circles of this radius in various parts of the Empire where aerodromes can be placed to realize that thousands of miles of trade routes would be left totally unprotected from attack by commerce destroying cruisers if reliance were placed on aircraft protection. Thus however necessary it may prove with an adequate air force the narrower waters, this would not prevent Great Britain from being starved if her trade routes were not protected by cruisers.

It is not my intention to detract from the importance of either submarine or aircraft. Their importance is increasing with each new development, and airplanes are urgently needed in connection with naval forces for scouting, reconnaissance, artillery ranging, spotting and observing.

I wish to emphasize the fact that, however much their importance may increase in naval warfare, they will not, outside the narrow waters such as the English Channel and the Mediterranean, materially affect the method of the control of ocean routes which in the main will continue to depend upon surface craft.

What percentage of the total naval protection will they receive?

The disposition of naval forces in time of war must depend on the disposition of the forces of the enemy and it is therefore impossible to lay down what percentage of protection any particular Dominion would be given in any particular emergency.

The duty of the main fleet, which is being maintained by Great Britain, would be, in the event of war, to guard the enemy's main fleet. Nothing must interfere with this main objective on which the command of the sea in the main theatre of operations depends. Whatever vessels can be spared from this important duty would be employed in protecting the trade routes from the depredations of commerce raiders which would undoubtedly be used by an enterprising enemy. The naval forces for commerce protection would be disposed so as to protect the most valuable points and so as to ensure the safety of the most important supplies and munitions for prosecuting the war and therefore it cannot be stated what percentage of protection any particular part of the Dominions would receive, except that the protection would vary with the vulnerability of the trade routes and the importance of the commerce which passes over it.

Sir Frederick Field made no reference whatever to the part that he himself had played in naval affairs, but the rows of ribbons across his breast told their own story, and his selection by the Admiralty for the delicate and responsible duties entailed by such a cruise, the first of his kind in forty years, is sufficient indication of their high opinion of his ability and judgment. The cruise has been no holiday, but has made increased demands on the energy of all those who have taken part in it. Social functions have been without number, but even while they are in progress the great work of cementing more closely the bonds of Empire has continued; the associations which grew out of the war have been renewed and strengthened, misunderstandings have been dispelled, and the regard of the Mother country for her daughters has been shown to be as deep and sincere as the love and respect of the daughters for the Parent State. With such ideals have these men of Britain's Navy been inspired in proceeding upon their "lawful occasions" and the



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same sentiments have prompted Britishers everywhere to welcome them to their shores with open arms.

Shipping.

S.S. Silvia arrived at Halifax at 6 a.m. to-day, 40 hours from this port.
S.S. Rosalind arrived at Halifax at 8 o'clock this morning and leaves for here at noon Tuesday.
S.S. Sable I. leaves Boston Tuesday.
S.S. Liggar County with a general cargo for this port sails on Tuesday and is due here on Monday, September 15th.
S.S. Belze, 3 days from North Sydney, has arrived with a cargo coal to A. Harvey & Co.
S.S. Cloverly has entered at St. Albans to load pit props by the British North American Trading Co.
Schooner Gordon Tibbo has cleared from Grand Bank with 2,235 qts. cod-fish, shipped by S. Tibbo & Sons and sailed for Fortune to finish.

S.S. Holly has sailed from Nipper's Harbor for Valleyfield to complete cargo pit props.
S.S. Vendome sailed from Nipper's Harbor this morning for Garston, England, via Confusion Bay.
S.S. Betty arrived at Humbermouth yesterday morning with a cargo coal for Nfld. Government Railway.
S.S. Canadian Gunner from Halifax with a general cargo has arrived at Corner Brook.
Schooners Dorothy, Melita and Reading have arrived at Grand Bank from the Banks hailing for 600 qts. cod-fish each.
Schooner Catherine, Capt. Fred Harris, has arrived at Bonavista from the Straits hailing for 600 qts. cod-fish.
Digby arrived at Boston 9 o'clock this morning.

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Stormy in Straits

A message from lighthouse keeper, J. Thomas, Belle Isle, to the Marine and Fisheries Department reads as follows:—Unable to obtain fishery report as the weather is very stormy. Do not think there is much doing as traps must be wrecked. Pat Glavin and John Parsons have loaded, John Waterman has 300 qts.

From Cape Race

Special to Evening Telegram
CAPE RACE, to-day.
Wind west, light, preceded by fog. The steamer Daisy was heard passing in at 8.30 a.m. Bar. 29.85; Ther. 65.
Tender string beans can be shipped with chit sauce and used in a sandwich filling.

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