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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

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CHAPTER 32 - A SUMMARY OF NOTABLE PROGRESS - 1910 TO 1913

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CHAPTER (32) - A SUMMARY OF NOTABLE PROGRESS - 1910 TO 1913

The second Fisher Government had been in office from April 1910 to June 1913 when it was defeated, and this is an appropriate point at which to summarize what had been achieved. Its Minister for Defence (Pearce) was very capable, and politically it was free of worries, having a majority of 9 in the House of Representatives and 10 in the Senate. Its record was a remarkable period of defence progress, which was also due to its good fortune in coming into power at the time of expiry^{of} section 87 of the Constitution on 31st December 1910. ~~This had limited Commonwealth and consequently Defence expenditure since the commencement of Federation.~~ The Government also had the courage of its political convictions in passing the Australian Notes Act and Bank Notes Act, the Land Tax Assessment and Land Tax Acts. With revenue buoyant, it introduced a bill to appropriate £2.59M. for payment to Trust Fund, Naval Defence Account, besides inheriting £250,000 paid to Harbour and Coastal Defence (Naval) Trust Account from its predecessor, the Deakin Government.

NAVAL DEFENCE

Creation of the Australian fleet unit. In 1913, the Australian fleet consisted of the following vessels:-

| <u>In Commission</u> | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|---|
| Battle cruiser | ... | ... | Australia. |
| Cruisers | ... | ... | Encounter. Melbourne. Sydney. Pioneer. |
| Destroyers | ... | ... | Warrego. Parramatta. Yarra. |
| Gunboats | ... | ... | Protector. Gayundah. |
| Torpedo boats | ... | ... | Countess of Hopetoun. Childers. |
| Submarines | ... | ... | A.E. 1. A.E. 2. |
| <u>Building</u> | | | |
| <u>In Australia</u> | | | |
| Cruiser | ... | ... | Brisbane. |
| Destroyers | ... | ... | Torrens. Swan. Derwent. |
| <u>In Great Britain</u> | | | |
| One Submarine Depot ship. | | | |
| One Oil Supply ship. | | | |

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Permanent personnel. The strength of the Permanent Naval Forces in 1910 was 240. On 1st June 1913, the total personnel of 3,400 was as follows:-

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|--------------|----------------|
| Lent from Royal Navy | ... | ... | 900 | |
| Ex-Royal Navy (Pensioners, &c.). | | | <u>480</u> | 1,380 |
| Australians transferred from Royal Navy | ... | ... | 360 | |
| Australians recruited in Australia for R.A.N. | ... | ... | <u>1,660</u> | |
| | | | | <u>2,020</u> |
| | | | | <u>3,400</u> 1 |

Training establishments. Three training establishments were functioning:-

Naval College - Temporarily situated at Geelong.

Naval Depot, Williamstown - Depot for receiving recruits, except boys, and giving them preliminary training (Wireless Telegraphy and Signalling Schools were attached to this depot, and Gunnery and Torpedo Schools were to be established; the depots and schools were to be transferred to Flinders Naval Base later).

H.M.A.S. "Tingira" - Boys' training ship at Sydney, for training boys for seamen, signalmen, &c., ratings. (H.M.A.S. "Encounter" was being used as a sea-going training ship for recruits after their preliminary training at the Williamstown Depot). 1

Naval reserves. The designation of the former Naval Militia was changed to the Royal Australian Naval Reserve (M), and its strength on the 1st June 1913, was 681.

Mid.

1. Memorandum of 23.6.1913 by the Minister for Defence (Powers) - P. 2

Royal Australian Naval Reserve (O) was formed from those trainees under the Universal Training System allotted to the Naval Service, and on the 1st June 1913, the total numbers borne in this branch of the Naval Reserve were - Adults, 652; Cadets, 2,983.

Naval Reserve Districts and Sub-districts for the purpose of training reserves were established in each of the States, and the vessels "Protector" and "Gayundah" were used for the sea-training.

Naval bases. In accordance with the Henderson recommendations for the establishment of Naval bases and sub-bases, work had been undertaken at Sydney, New South Wales; Flinders, ~~Naval~~ base, Victoria; Henderson ~~Naval~~ base, Cockburn Sound, Western Australia; and Port Stephens, New South Wales. Land had been acquired at Port Lincoln, South Australia; Albany, Western Australia; Brisbane, Queensland; and Hobart, Tasmania. The Governments of the various States had been asked to reserve land at the other places mentioned in the Henderson report. The State dockyard at Cockatoo Island had been acquired from the New South Wales Government, and the building of the cruiser "Brisbane" and the three destroyers was being carried out under the direct control of the Commonwealth Government. By arrangement with the Admiralty and the New South Wales Government the naval establishments of the Admiralty at Sydney had been taken over. *Rey was*

Administration. A Naval Board as recommended in the Henderson report was constituted, and a Navy Office established in Melbourne for the central naval administration.

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MILITARY DEFENCE

X Universal training.¹ The Defence Act having been proclaimed to operate on 1st January 1911 and junior and senior cadet training to commence from 1st July 1911, the preparatory stage prior to January 1911, required the preparation of regulations and standing orders for cadets, the appointment and training of 200 additional drill instructors and 224 area officers, the organization of training, battalion and brigade areas throughout the Commonwealth and the allotment of the instructional staff to them. Orders were placed for the manufacture of arms, ammunition, accoutrements and uniforms.

✓ In the preliminary stage from January to June 1911 ~~and~~ prior to the commencement of training, the registration, inspection and medical examination of the 1894-97 quotas of senior cadets was carried out and also the medical examination of the 1898-99 quotas of junior cadets, together with the issue of exemptions to the medically unfit and those resident in remote localities. The next step was the appointment of localities for training, the organization of senior cadet units, the allotment of trainees and the appointment of officers. There was also the distribution of arms, accoutrements, and uniforms.

In the third stage from July 1911 to June 1912, there were the medical examinations of the 1894 quota of senior cadets for the commencement of their training in the Citizen Forces in 1912-13, the preparation of regulations

✓ I.C.P.P. 1912, Vol 2. P. 87

1. ~~Annexure 4 23-1-1913 of a Minister for Defence (Papers)~~

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and standing orders for these forces, the re-organization of the whole of the existing Militia units, and the allotment of the existing officers and the 1894 recruits to units. The opportunity was taken to adopt the recommendations of the Imperial Conference of 1909 for the standardization of the organization of the forces of the Dominions on similar lines to those of the United Kingdom regular army, and the Militia Forces were re-organized accordingly.¹ Orders were placed for the manufacture of arms, ammunition, accoutrements and uniforms for the 1894 quota for the Citizen Forces and the incoming 1898 quota for the senior cadets. Each successive year the appropriate steps were repeated for the annual incoming quotas of the junior and senior cadets, and Citizen Forces.

Personnel. On 31st December 1913, the strength of the Permanent and Citizen Military Forces had increased as follows:-

| | <u>Permanent Forces.¹</u> | <u>Citizen Forces.²</u> |
|---|--|--|
| Strength in 1910 prior to preparatory stage ... | 1,455 | 21,877 ^(a) |
| Strength on 31st December 1913 ... | 2,468 | 45,915 ⁽⁴⁾ |
| Increase: | 1,013 | 24,038 |

(a) Includes 33,601 liable for service under universal training.

The figures for cadets were as follow:-

| | <u>Junior Cadets</u> | <u>Senior Cadets</u> |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Strength in 1910 prior to preparatory stage. ³ ... | 24,055 | 10,597 |
| Strength on 31st December 1913. ¹ ... | 55,850 | 89,184 ^(a) 87,965 |
| Increase: | 31,795 | 79,587 ^(a) 77,368 |

1. C.23, P.17.

2. Hamilton Report - P.14.

3. Memorandum of 23-6-1913 & no. written in response (P.11).

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Defence schemes. Since the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for defence on Federation, the completion of defence schemes by the Commandants of the States, encountered difficulties in the absence of an authoritative strategical appreciation on which to base them. The report of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1906 provided this.¹

Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges, Chief of Intelligence, who had been sent to London to furnish information and assistance in drawing up ^{this} the report, energetically pursued the ^{preparation of defence schemes} matter, on his return in 1907. The War and Peace Establishments, and the organization of the Forces, and their allotment to the Field Force and Garrison Troops^① were ^{completed} prepared, giving sufficient data for the preparation of the schemes to be commenced.

In August 1908, Bridges reported that progress was unsatisfactory. Two States had forwarded drafts of part of the schemes which were of little value, the scheme of a third State was on its way and three States had not replied. He was convinced that the schemes would not be completed in a reasonable time unless the State Staffs were given special instruction and one officer in each State was detailed to draw up the scheme. Accordingly, he recommended that a selected officer, relieved from all other duty, should be detailed to go to the States in turn and draw up the respective schemes. A class, composed of one or two selected officers from each State, should be held for instruction in the preparation of ^d Defence schemes and other general staff work. The course would be divided into two parts, the first to be held in November 1908 and the second part in the following May. At the end of November six of the officers attending the class (one in each State) should be appointed to the Headquarters Staff of each

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State for the purpose of drawing up before April the schemes for their respective States. When the class re-assembled in May, the schemes could be discussed and revised by the whole class. The schemes when drawn up, would be taken into use and provisionally approved until the following action had been completed:-

1. Revision by District Commandants and State Defence Committees.
2. The remarks of the Defence Committees and the schemes would then be forwarded for the opinion of the Colonial Defence Committee which had in the past always revised the Australian schemes.
3. When the Colonial Defence Committee's remarks were received, the schemes would be submitted for formal approval and would be taken into use until the next revision.

✓ In 1910. The C.D.C. reported that the schemes had been completed & forwarded to the Minister (Ewing).
 ✓ These proposals were approved by the Minister (Ewing).

Mobilization plans. Bridges also recommended that the following basis on which mobilization should be worked out in detail:-

- (a) Mobilization to take place in two stages -
 - (i) 1st stage, assembly of companies and squadrons at peace strength at their respective places of assembly.
 - (ii) 2nd stage, completion of units to war establishment.
- (b) Units of the Field Force to be sent to war stations as soon as possible after completion of the 1st stage, either by complete regiments and battalions, or by companies and squadrons as best suited local conditions.

✓ 1. By Files 1852/4/75, 1852/1/4, C.P.P. 1910, Vol 2 - P.112

- (c) Any personnel required to complete peace establishment should be enlisted locally and sent to war stations.
- (d) Personnel required to bring peace establishment up to war establishment might be enlisted, equipped, and receive their preliminary training at the place of mobilization.
- (e) It was desirable that units should hold in peace the whole of the equipment required for the first stage. The peace equipment, which formed part of the war equipment, except that in possession of the soldier, or of a company or squadron, should be kept at corps headquarters, or places of mobilization, and issued thereat.
- (f) In a central position in each State there might be an expense magazine and a grand magazine. These two magazines might be kept under the same roof, provided that their contents were kept apart. The former would be used for storing the war outfit not in possession of units, which was required for the first stage, and the latter that required for the second stage.
- (g) The mobilization equipment for the Garrison Troops might be stored as far as possible at war stations. The remainder could be kept in expense magazines, and issued to troops at their war stations. 1

In ^{July} December 1910, the Chief of the General Staff (Hoad) reported that the schemes were sufficiently complete to permit details connected with the mobilization of personnel and material being worked out. 2

Progress with Defence schemes and mobilization plans.

By 1913, the end of the period of this summary, the Inspector-General (Kirkpatrick) reported that the General Staff had throughout the year had its proper complement of qualified Directors, and consequently the preparation of plans of operation had been satisfactorily begun. The formation of a Headquarters' Mobilization Committee facilitated proper guidance and supervision of the District Mobilization Committees, with the result that arrangements had been formulated, and were in print, which, though by no means complete, should greatly simplify the initial work of mobilization. All Defence schemes had been revised and printed, and copies sent to the War Office. 3

1. by File 1856/114.

2. C.P.P. 1910 Vol 2 - P. 112.

3. Annual report of the Inspector-General
30/5/1913 - Para 8-11.

Administration. Consequent upon the introduction of Universal Training, the Military Board was reconstituted, and to facilitate administration certain powers formerly exercised by the Board in its corporate capacity were vested in the individual members ^{according to} ~~in accordance with~~ the subjects assigned to them.

In October 1912,² a conference of militia officers representing all Military Districts was held in Melbourne. Its purpose was to discuss matters in connection with the Commonwealth Military and Universal Training Regulations, and to make recommendations thereon, relative to the re-organization of the Military Forces, consequent on the introduction of Universal Training. In October-November 1913,³ a conference was held for the same purpose following conferences in each Military District.

DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

The Defence expenditure in 1909/10 was £1.532M.⁴
It rose as follows from 1910/11 to 1912/13:-

| | | <u>1910/11</u> | <u>1911/12</u> | <u>1912/13</u> |
|-------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | £ m. | £ m. | £ m. |
| Central Administration | .. | .045 | .064 | .087 |
| Naval Forces | | 1.464 | 1.629 | 1.650 |
| Military Forces | | 1.386 | 2.055 | 2.309 |
| Aviation School | | - | .003 | .005 |
| Munitions Supply Branch | .. | .103 | .159 | .162 |
| Aggregate Expenditure | .. | <u>2.998</u> | <u>3.910</u> | <u>4.213</u> |

(In millions only as indicated above)

1. Memorandum of 23-6-1913 of the Minister for Defence (Peace) - P.9.
2. Def. File 1846/1/33.
3. Resolutions of Conference of Militia Officers Oct-Nov 1913.
4. Summary Defence Expenditure - P.8.

THE MINISTER'S OBSERVATIONS

✓ X ✓
Senator C.F. (later Sir George) Pearce^{who} had been
Minister for Defence from November 1908 to June 1909 and later
✓ X from April 1910 to June 1913, and had carried the chief
ministerial responsibility for the achievement of this progress.
He did not consider it would be boastful to say that the results
were a record of administration in the Defence Department.
Public opinion as to the necessity of energetic measures had
been awakened, and its reflex had been seen in Governmental
action and Parliamentary approval.

X
The scheme of Universal Training constituted a
gigantic revolution in the industrial and social life of the
Commonwealth, and few changes of a like character had been
effected with so little friction. There was at the outset
some grumbling and some trouble, as was inevitable in bringing
in such a great scheme over such a huge area as the continent,
of ~~Australia~~. Three years ago there was no equipment, no
organization, no personnel for the new scheme, and this had to
be provided for at the same time as the new scheme was being
brought into being. Without doubt it was a tribute to the
universal assent that had been given to the scheme that there
was so little friction comparatively speaking.

X
The Inspector-General had reported that both the
Cadets and the Militia were loyally acting up to the spirit of
the Act, and ~~carrying out the spirit of~~ the regulations.

✓
The Minister paid a tribute to the loyal assistance that
he had received from the whole of the officers and staff

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X (Civil, Naval and Military), who had had the task of carrying out the naval and military schemes, often under great disabilities. The spade work had been done and it only remained for an efficient administration, loyal support, and an intelligent public opinion to make the schemes thoroughly effective, and a real contribution to the defence of Australia and the Empire.¹ It may be added that the Minister's observations also marked another step in Pearce's distinguished ministerial career in defence administration, which was shortly to be enhanced by his service as Minister for Defence during the First World War.

X 1. Memorandum of 23-6-1913 of the Minister for Defence (Pearce) - P.12.