

CHAPTER II.

Administration of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy.

It is recommended that the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy should be administered by a Naval Board, consisting of the Minister of Defence and the Chief of the Naval Staff, the latter being a Commodore.

Working under the Board, but not members of it, there should be a Secretary and other officers.

The organization of the New Zealand Naval Administration which I propose is shown graphically in Table A ; the constitution of the Naval Board is enumerated below :—

THE NAVAL BOARD OF NEW ZEALAND.

The Minister.—General direction of all business ; questions of policy ; finance.

The Chief of the Naval Staff.—The fighting and seagoing efficiency of the New Zealand Division ; operations of war and all staff business ; personnel, *matériel* and finance.

2. It will be seen that the administration proposed places the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy, like the remainder of that service, under the control of Civil Authority.

As the Minister is responsible to Parliament, it is possible for him to accept or reject any of the proposals made to him by the Chief of the Naval Staff, who is his sole colleague on the Board.

A wise interpretation by the Minister of his powers and functions and the degree to which he shall fall in with the views of his expert colleague on technical questions is necessary for the success of the system.

3. At the British Admiralty at Home difficulty has occasionally arisen when the Minister is at variance with the views of his expert colleagues. It is inevitable that differences of opinion should arise, and no legislation can prevent this.

If the matter is considered by the Sea Lords of the Admiralty to be one of vital importance, and their views are disregarded, their only course is resignation. This course has never as yet been actually adopted by the Sea Lords as a whole, although, on occasions, Sea Lords have intimated that they will find it necessary to resign if a certain course is persisted in. The resignation of the Sea Lords would be so serious a matter and might involve such grave consequences, particularly in war-time, that naval officers have been very loth to take such action. It must be borne in mind that *it is only because the British nation, impressed with the exceeding importance of the Navy to its existence, watches with great interest matters connected with that service, that the resignation of the Sea Lords is a matter that would carry weight with Parliament and with the public.*

4. In the case of New Zealand, where a new naval organization is about to be started, it appears desirable to suggest arrangements by which the Prime Minister can be made acquainted with the point of view of the Naval Member of the Board should the latter be in disagreement with the action about to be taken by the Minister on a technical question of vital importance to naval efficiency.