

SECTION I—STATE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Navy Department is controlled by the Naval Board, established by the Naval Defence Amendment Act, 1936.

2. The Board consists of—

The Minister of Defence (Chairman).

A Captain, Royal Navy, with the rank of Commodore (as First Naval Member and Chief of Naval Staff).

A Captain, Royal Navy (as Second Naval Member).

A Commander (S), Royal Navy, with the acting rank of Captain (S), Royal Navy (as Naval Secretary).

3. A state of the Fleet as at 31st March, 1949, is attached as Appendix I.

SECTION II—GENERAL SURVEY OF THE YEAR

4. The main naval event of the year was the arrival of the first four frigates at Auckland on 5th January, 1949. With their large radius of action, modern A/S armament, and good accommodation, these ships are a welcome addition to the New Zealand Squadron. Two further frigates are expected to reach New Zealand by the end of August.

5. Consequent on the arrival of the frigates, it has been decided to reconstitute the New Zealand Squadron, with the Commanding Officer, H.M.N.Z.S. "Bellona" as Senior Officer, as from 31st March, 1949.

6. Negotiations are proceeding for the purchase of a surveying ship in the United Kingdom. Construction will take about three years. In order to commence surveying as soon as possible it is hoped to obtain a surveying ship on loan from the Royal Australian Navy for a period of three years.

7. Other changes that have occurred during the year are—

(a) The corvettes H.M.N.Z. Ships "Arabis" and "Arbutus," originally presented to New Zealand as a free gift from the United Kingdom, have been returned to the Royal Navy. They left New Zealand in April, 1948, with crews for the frigates, arriving in the United Kingdom in June.

(b) Two 75 ft. tugs—the "Arataki" and "Manawanui"—have been completed for service at Auckland.

(c) The Wellington Harbour Board have intimated that they no longer require the Saint Class Tug "Toia," which they have held on loan from the Royal New Zealand Navy. There is no prospective naval use for the "Toia," and she is to be offered for sale by tender.

(d) The Royal New Zealand Navy Headquarters in London has been renamed H.M.N.Z.S. "Maori." This was done at the request of the Admiralty as the existing name—H.M.N.Z.S. "Cook"—was causing confusion with the Royal Navy surveying ship of the same name.

8. Movements of ships have included a Pacific Islands cruise by H.M.N.Z.S. "Bellona" from June to August, 1948, during the course of which His Excellency the Governor-General was embarked for a period, and visits by H.M.N.Z.S. "Bellona" and the frigates to New Zealand ports, ending in combined exercises during the month of March. Further details are given in Appendix II.

9. No British or Commonwealth warships have visited New Zealand during the year. The postponement of the visit of His Majesty the King in H.M.S. "Vanguard" was a great disappointment. The French sloop "Dumont D'Urville" visited Auckland in May, 1948.