

Thirteenth Day.
8 May 1907.

NAVAL DEFENCE.
(Sir
Joseph Ward.)

assented to their proposal by stating he was prepared to agree to whichever course they desired. That brings up the question of the position of New Zealand as one of the contributors to the agreement, whether we are going to hold Great Britain and Australia to that agreement, or set them free to do at an early date what they think is essential and proper for them. I can only say at once I am perfectly certain both my colleagues and the Parliament of my country, if the First Lord of the Admiralty, who is responsible for the general government of the sea defences of the Empire itself, is willing to meet Australia in that respect, we would not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy, but I think would favourably consider the cancelment of the agreement, with a view to allowing Australia to have a free hand with the Admiralty, and New Zealand also, on its own line, to have a free hand to carry out what it considers is best for our particular circumstances, in order to make the position easy of settlement, as between the Admiralty and the Commonwealth of Australia, I shall be only too glad to recommend it to my colleagues, and to recommend it to my Parliament. In any case it would take some little time to give effect to the change that Australia wants from that point of view, and long before any inconvenience could arise no doubt the Parliament of our country would give expression to what I am now voicing here as its representative. New Zealand as a country has been desirous of giving upon the basis of the contribution of Australia its fair proportion. The six States of Australia gave an average of a little over 33,000*l.* each, and originally as fixed the contribution of a colony like New Zealand was fairly proportionate to the individual contributions of the States of the great Commonwealth of Australia, and we paid our 40,000*l.* a year. I am quite certain New Zealand, if required to, under altered proposals that may be suggested, with a view to cementing the defence of the Empire as a whole, would be willing to increase its contribution.

I thank Lord Tweedmouth for the information he has furnished to me. I am exceedingly obliged to the Admiralty. The whole matter will receive the fullest consideration of my colleagues and myself at the earliest possible date.

Dr. SMARTT : Lord Elgin, and gentlemen, I am extremely obliged to Lord Tweedmouth for the statement he has made (a statement which I think will be welcomed by the people in Cape Colony, and certainly by the Natal Volunteers) that he has kindly consented to agree to meet the request that on the passage of the Bill submitted to the Admiralty the title "Royal" should be attached to them.

I think, on the first meeting we had with the First Lord of the Admiralty, he stated it was the intention of the Admiralty, as far as possible, to deal with each Colony on the lines of the particular circumstances appertaining to that Colony. I think the statement that he has made to-day shows the earnest intention of the Admiralty to try and move forward in that direction.

So far as the Cape is concerned, I take it Lord Tweedmouth's statement for the Admiralty is first, that on the passage of the Bill which has been submitted to the Admiralty, the Naval Volunteers will be able to style themselves Royal Naval Volunteers; secondly, the Admiralty will, pending further arrangements, place at the disposal of the Naval Volunteers a ship, most probably the "Odin," with her guns, on which our volunteers, as well as those of the sister Colony of Natal, can get as thorough a sea-going training as possible. In the meantime, the cost of the nucleus crew for that ship, whatever crew the Admiralty considers necessary to enable her to go to sea, would be defrayed out of the joint contribution now given by the Cape and Natal to the Admiralty. I presume I would be in order, after