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THE FRENCH NAVAL PROGRAMME OF 1900-1906.¹

*By M. de LANESSAN, Member of the Chamber of Deputies,
and late Minister of Marine.*

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Continued from December JOURNAL, p. 1417.

CHAPTER VII.

THE natural conclusion of the study we have been making is that every scientifically organised Navy must be composed of a more or less considerable number of units of each of the classes which we have been considering.

The ships of each of these classes fulfil certain specified duties, which cannot be so well performed by other vessels; so that, as the Minister of Marine justly remarked in his explanatory Note on the proposals for increasing the fleet, it is impossible to avoid a recognition of the principle that "the specialisation of men and means for certain distinctly marked rôles, which governs the march of progress in all branches of human knowledge, has become by its generalisation a veritable scientific law."

In spite of the praise lavished by some public men and writers on certain types of hybrid ships, which are to be capable of carrying out every duty, all Navies instinctively conform to this principle of specialisation, and all, after feeling their way, which is quite justified by the complicated nature of the problems to be solved, and where progress has been extremely rapid, have practically adopted the classification of the principal units of a fleet that we have indicated.

There is no important Navy which does not possess battle-ships, and which is not continuing to build them, in view of pitched battles and offensive or defensive operations in neighbouring seas. In all Navies the qualities which are most sought for in this class of ship are offensive power with adequate protection; and it may safely be asserted that these objects have not been attained in a battle-ship, if one or the other of these two qualities has been sacrificed in favour of some other which in this class of ship is not of primary importance. So also in all Navies one finds cruisers, that is, vessels in which high speed and an extensive radius of action predominate, because in contradistinction to battle-ships, they are intended for long drawn-out operations in distant seas, requiring smart and bold handling rather than great offensive power.

There is undoubtedly a tendency in battle-ships and cruisers to assimilate each other's qualities, more than existed formerly. This is notably the case in offensive power, since the introduction of numerous and powerful medium-sized Q.F. guns in battle-ships, which formerly

¹ "Le Programme Maritime de 1900-1906. Par J. L. de Lanessan, Député, Ancien Ministre de la Marine. 2nd Edition. Paris: 1903.

only carried a limited number of guns of a large calibre with a comparatively speaking slow rate of fire. Nevertheless, it is a grave error to attempt to arm cruisers with the same heavy guns as battle-ships, since the insufficiency of their protection rendering them incapable of fighting the latter, there is no need to weight them with these weapons, the only object of which is to pierce very thick armour. So also there has been a certain *rapprochement* between battle-ships and cruisers owing to the tendency which has grown up of increasing the speed of the former and adding to the armour of the latter, due to a belief that it is possible to join the qualities of the two classes in one ship, but all attempts in this direction have resulted in failure. Those Navies which have experimented in this direction have all regretted it, as the vessels built with this object are not in a position to run down fast cruisers, owing to insufficiency of speed, neither can they risk an action with real battle-ships, their protection being too weak. As up to the present we have avoided committing this error, the experience of others ought to encourage us to persist in this line of conduct and avoid the construction of these feeble hybrids.

Our duty, then, is to build battle-ships and cruisers, and instead of trying to assimilate them to each other, we must, on the other hand, give to each, as far as we possibly can, the primordial qualities of their respective classes. Instead of giving our fleet units which are to be capable of doing everything, and in reality are the very reverse, we must provide units as well organised as possible for the special rôle which our seamen assign to them; to our battle-ships the important offensive and defensive operations in European waters; to our armoured cruisers, the arduous work in the ocean and distant seas, in addition to the assistance they can render our battle squadrons in European waters. These two classes of ships characterise essentially two forms of the naval policy of France, which are represented sometimes as being distinct or opposed, but which in reality cannot be sacrificed the one to the other without peril, and in this connection I will say a few words on what has been called—the “distant seas” and the “European seas” policies.

By means of the first we defend our Colonial and commercial interests in different parts of the world; by means of the second we must strive to prevent any nation acquiring, to our detriment, the mastery of the seas which bathe our coasts. For the first we must construct armoured cruisers with as high a speed as can be given them, joined to a radius of action which will enable them to keep the sea for a considerable period without recoaling, and with an offensive power and protection, which will enable them to give battle successfully to any foreign ships of the same class as themselves, and also to destroy the weaker ones, of which our rivals dispose of so many. For these ships we must create in our most important Colonies, at Saigon, Diego Suarez, Dakar, bases sufficiently well organised to provide the means of making repairs, and of supplying provisions, ammunition, etc., and coal; in a word, a base at which our cruisers will be able to find a harbour of refuge, or a centre from which to act, according to circumstances.

For the second form of our naval policy, we must, as we have already laid stress on in these pages, construct the most powerful battle-ships that we can, brought as completely up to date as is possible at the time they are laid down, and from these ships our battle-squadrons must be organised. Both cruisers and battle-ships can be usefully

assisted sometimes by torpedo-vessels and submarines, whose numbers must be proportioned, not to that of the large ships, as has been the case for a long time, but to the number and the nature of the operations assigned to them in time of war, whether to defend our coasts against the attacks of the enemy, or to menace his roadsteads and the vessels anchored in them.

These small vessels will be no less useful at our oversea bases as at home. In distant seas as in European waters, their action will be the same, their services will be identical, and in the one as in the other the more numerous they are the better. Finally, with the object of protecting our squadrons against the torpedo-vessels and submarines of the enemy, we must have destroyers sufficiently stoutly constructed to be able to accompany our battle-ships, sufficiently fast to be able to overhaul the enemy's, and sufficiently well armed to be able to destroy them. The number of the destroyers must be in proportion to our battle-ships, and sufficiently numerous to allow of every battle-ship being accompanied by at least one.

When the programme voted by the Chambers is completed, that is to say, at the end of 1906, our fleet will dispose of 28 battle-ships, 56 cruisers, of which 24 will be armoured, 72 destroyers, 50 of which will have a very high speed, and of not less than 200 torpedo-boats, and of a number of submarines, which will probably be not much under a hundred.

Classes of Ships and Displacement.	Anterior to the Programme of 1900.	Of the Programme of 1900.	Total, 1st January, 1907.	Names of the Ships.
<i>quadron Battle-ships:—</i>				
Of 14,865 tons	—	6	6	{ République, Patrie, Démocratie, Liberté, Justice, Vérité.
13,000 to 14,000 tons	—	—	—	
12,000 to 13,000 „	5	—	5	{ Bouvet, Carnot, Formidable, Iéna, Suffren.
11,000 to 12,000 „	9	—	9	{ Charlemagne, Masséna, Charles Martel, Jauréguiberry, Brennus, Amiral-Baudin, Amiral-Duperré, Gaulois, Saint-Louis
10,000 to 11,000 „	6	—	6	{ Hoche, Magenta, Marceau, Neptune, Courbet, Dévastation.
9,000 to 10,000 „	1	—	1	Redoutable.
8,000 to 9,000 „	1	—	1	Henri IV.
	22	6	28	
<i>Coast-Defence Vessels.¹</i>				
Of 7,000 to 8,000 tons... ..	4	—	4	{ Caïman, Indomptable, Requin, Terrible.
6,000 to 7,000 „	5	—	5	{ Amiral-Tréhouard, Bouvines, Jemmapes, Valmy, Furieux.
5,000 to 6,000 „	3	—	3	Tonnant, Fulminant, Tonnerre.
4,000 to 5,000 „	2	—	2	Tempête, Vengeur.
	14	—	14	

¹ After the coast-defence vessels, there must be placed 8 armoured gun-boats, 4 first-class displacing 1,700 tons, and 4 second-class displacing 1,000 to 1,400 tons. These are vessels suitable exclusively for guarding the entrance to rivers. There are two of them at Saigon ("Styx" and "Achéron").

PROGRAMME—contd.

Classes of Ships and Displacement.	Anterior to the Programme of 1900.	Of the Programme of 1900.	Total, 1st January, 1907.	Names of the Ships.
<i>Armoured Cruisers.</i>				
Of 12,550 tons and 22 knots ...	—	5	5	{ Léon Gambetta, Jules Ferry, Victor Hugo, Jules Michelet, Ernest Renan.
11,000 to 12,000 tons and 23 knots	1	—	1	{ Jeanne d'Arc.
10,000 to 11,000 " 21 "	5	—	5	{ Gloire, Condé, Sully, Marseillaise, Aube.
9,000 to 10,000 " 21 "	3	—	3	{ Dupetit-Thouars, Gueydon, Montcalm.
8,000 to 9,000 " 18 "	1	—	1	{ D'Entrecasteaux.
7,000 to 8,000 " 21 "	3	—	3	{ Dupleix, Desaix, Kléber.
6,000 to 7,000 tons, less than 20 "	1	—	1	{ Dupuy-de-Lôme.
5,000 to 6,000 tons ...	1	—	1	{ Pothuau.
4,000 to 5,000 " ...	4	—	4	{ Latouché-Tréville, Chanzy, Amiral-Charner, Bruix.
	19	5	24	
<i>Protected Cruisers.</i>				
Of 8,000 to 9,000 tons and 23 knots...	2	—	2	{ Guichen, Chateau-Renault.
7,000 to 8,000 tons... and 23 knots	1	—	1	{ Tage.
5,000 to 6,000 tons {and 23 knots	1	—	1	{ Jurien de la Gravière.
4,000 to 5,000 tons {and 18 "	4	—	4	{ Cécille, Duquesne, Tourville, Foudre.
4,000 to 5,000 tons and 18 knots	8	—	8	{ Sfax, Alger, Isly, Jean-Bart, Descartes, Pascal, Catinat, d'Assas.
3,000 to 4,000 " 18 "	10	—	10	{ Duchayla, Cassard, Bugeaud, Chasseloup-Laubat, Friant, Dubourdieu, Duguay-Trouin, Davout, Suchet, Protet.
2,000 to 3,000 " 18 "	8	—	8	{ Linois, Galilée, Lavoisier, Surcouf, Lalande, Troude, d'Estrées, Infernet.
1,000 to 2,000 " 18 "	3	—	3	{ Cosmao, Coëtlogon, Forbin.
	37	—	37	
<i>Torpedo-Boat Destroyers.</i>				
Old and rather slow, of 900 to 1,700 tons ...	12	—	12	
Fast, of 300 to 315 tons ...	22	28	50	
Torpedo-avisos, old and rather slow	10	—	10	
	44	28	72	
Torpilleurs de haute mer, or first-class Submarines and submersibles ...	158 6	44 + ^{x1} 44 + ^{x1}	202 + ^{x1} 50 + ^{x1}	

¹ All the torpedo-boats, submarines and submersibles, the number of which is indicated above, will be completed in 1904. New units will be laid down in 1903, 1904, 1905, and 1906.

As auxiliaries to our battle-ships, we already possess 14 coast-defence vessels, all of which have quite recently been modernised, and should be able to give a good account of themselves, as they are well protected and have a powerful armament. The accompanying table shows the number of units of the different types of ship, which we shall possess in 1907.

With these ships the Navy ought to be able to organise satisfactorily not only the sea defence of our home coasts, with Algeria and Tunis, but also of those stations which we have to maintain in distant parts of the world for the defence of our Colonial and commercial interests; for this latter duty there are available a number of small vessels, avisos, gun-boats, etc., not given in the list above, although we should be wrong in terming them of "no fighting value," as some people do.

The expression, "a ship of no fighting value," is deceptive, since as a rule it is only relative. Take the case of certain gun-boats, which would be useless for fighting purposes in European waters, but are, nevertheless, of considerable value on distant stations where our rivals maintain similar vessels, being especially valuable for river work, and for service in places where only light-draught vessels can go. There are certain critics, of course, who hold that all these vessels should be replaced by others capable of doing real fighting work in any part of the world; but experience has shown this to be impossible. A case in point is the China station, where during the recent disturbances our gun-boats rendered invaluable services up the rivers, while our large cruisers were unable, owing to their size, to get to any of the places where their presence would have been most useful. Facts like these have been too often overlooked during the last fifteen years, with the result that should some of our special service small vessels come to grief we absolutely have no others with which to replace them.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE UNITS OF OUR FLEET.

It remains now to settle what should be the distribution of the various ships that we shall have in 1907 in European waters, and those points abroad where we have interests to safeguard.

The policy of maintaining battle squadrons in both the Mediterranean and the Channel has sometimes met with much criticism. Nevertheless, it is a policy dictated by the geographical situation of the country, by the many and considerable interests that we have in both seas; and perhaps even in a greater degree by the policy followed by our naval rivals.

In the Mediterranean our fleet has not only to protect our home coasts, but also to ensure the safety of Corsica, Algeria and Tunis, not only against Spain, Italy, or Austria, which are our neighbours, and the Triple Alliance, but against Great Britain, which holds the extremely powerful bases of Malta and Gibraltar, and maintains very considerable naval forces in the Mediterranean. Nobody can therefore deny that the protection of our territories and our interests against such adversaries requires the constant presence in the Mediterranean of a very powerful battle fleet, and there are some among us who would like to see all our battle-ships concentrated in those waters. Those people, however, take an exaggerated view of the necessities of the case, and they

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forget that battle squadrons are, before all and above all, the offensive weapon *par excellence* of every Navy. For however important the offensive operations may be to which we may be committed in the Mediterranean, they will not be the only ones which our Army and Navy ought to attempt in case of a maritime war.

If Italy or Spain were to be the sole objects of our offensive operations, the naval forces that we actually maintain in the Mediterranean would suffice to cover the disembarkation of an expeditionary force. Neither the one nor the other of these two Powers could protect itself effectually against our fleet unless they obtained the assistance of either England or the Triple Alliance.

Against England directly, in the Mediterranean we could do very little beyond an attack on Malta or Gibraltar, two places so well defended that they scarcely require the support of the English squadrons. It has been suggested that in case of a war with England operations could be directed against Egypt; but the probability is that any such attempt would provoke a hostile expression of opinion in Europe, which would be fatal to them. We could only venture on such operations against Egypt with any certainty of carrying them through in face of the opposition of Europe, by arrangement, with Germany. Could such an arrangement be made, and under what conditions, and at what price? The question is one of such importance that it cannot be left out of sight when the distribution of our squadrons is considered. To concentrate in the Mediterranean the whole of our armoured ships, to consequently give up the idea of any offensive operations whatever in the North, and to abandon to the enemy the entire command of the Channel, in view of carrying out an operation which might be stopped by Europe at the last moment, would simply permit England to concentrate in the Western Mediterranean the greater part of her naval forces, which would give her a very superior force to ours, and deprive us of any benefit from the concentration of our own squadrons in that sea.

However, the interests which we have to defend in the Mediterranean are so great that we must always maintain very strong squadrons there. Corsica, Algeria and Tunis must be protected against any attack by any naval Power whatever, and it will not be sufficient that these territories should be provided with troops and land or sea defences; it is imperative that no other nation should be able to dispute with us with any chance of success the command of the western basin of the Mediterranean; we cannot permit any Navy to have such a preponderance in that portion of the sea that we might have to fear the cutting of our communications with Corsica, Algeria, and Tunis. It is therefore necessary that our squadrons there should be strong enough to enable us to hold our own against the forces that England and Italy maintain in those waters.

In the North we have to assure the protection of our coasts against all attempts at landing by hostile forces, and to preserve as far as possible our naval and commercial ports against bombardments.

From the point of view of hostile landings, it is necessary to distinguish between the position of Great Britain and the Triple Alliance.

In a war with the first-named of these Powers, acting single-handed against us, no serious attempt at a landing on any point of

our coasts, it seems to us, is to be feared. The heads of our Army openly boast they would like to see the attempt made; but without going as far as that, one can say with them that the enemy would pay dearly for his success. However strong might be his expeditionary force, it could not possibly make head against our Army, which, entirely unhampered in its movements, could concentrate all its efforts against it.

In a war with the Triple Alliance, the situation will be different. Whilst Germany, Italy, and Austria would attack our land frontiers, nothing would be easier than for Germany to organise a landing on some predetermined point of our coast, if we abandoned the command of the North Sea, the Channel, and the Atlantic. But if we do away with our Northern Squadron, we are abandoning, without any doubt, this command of waters which it is necessary for us to maintain. Neither cruisers, nor torpedo-boats, nor submarines, will avail to prevent high speed mail steamers supported and protected by battle squadrons from landing troops on some point of the coast where the concentration of our land forces would be difficult—and all the world knows that there is no lack of such points on our coast.

Since Germany has become a naval Power, we must have in the North squadrons as strong as hers, as any action they may attempt will be supported by the efforts of her Army in the East, which it will take a large part of our land forces to keep in check. From the point of view of the offensive, we can do but little in the North against German territory, as the coasts are difficult of approach by large armoured ships, and are, moreover, strongly fortified; but we shall have to face the certainty of pitched battles in the Channel, North Sea, or Atlantic, either to repulse an attack directed against some point on our coast, or to prevent an attempt on the part of the German fleet to join hands in the Mediterranean with those of Italy and Austria.

Equally from the point of view of the offensive in a war with Great Britain, will our position in the North be of great importance.

In a war in which we shall be alone face to face with England, but where the Triple Alliance will observe a hostile neutrality towards any operations on our part against Egypt, an eventuality which we must keep in view, our interest will be to concentrate in the North and East strong forces able to take the offensive, while in the Mediterranean we ought to look to the protection of our coasts, including Algeria and Tunis, rather than attempt to take the offensive against the English possessions or fleet. It is in the North that we shall find the best means for utilising the enormous military superiority that we have over Great Britain, because it is on the coasts of the United Kingdom that a landing could be attempted with most hope of success. It is in the North that our armoured cruisers will be in the best position for working mischief on English commerce, either by the destruction of merchant-ships or by preventing their free movement. In the Northern seas no tactics could be more damaging to us than a pure defensive, especially against England. With the detestable weather which is so common in the Channel, our simply defensive ships, such as torpedo-boats and submarines, will often be unable to leave our harbours, while the English battle-ships and cruisers, being able to keep the sea, will bombard our commercial towns and harbours. It is then indispensable that we maintain in the North a powerful force, for it is in a single-handed war with England

that we shall be able to make the most effective use of this force, either by taking the offensive the moment war is declared, or by keeping the enemy's forces on the move until a decisive naval action had been fought in the Mediterranean. It is in the North that we must concentrate our best-armed, best-protected, and fastest cruisers, not only to lend a helping hand to our fighting squadrons, but because it is the most favourable position for running down weaker cruisers of the enemy and their destroyers, and for harrying their trade.

Lastly, it is in our Northern ports that we must distribute our best torpedo-boats, and submarines and submersibles with the greatest radius of action; and although, in view of the strong currents and frequent gales they may be considerably hampered in carrying out their work, yet nevertheless the results ought to bear good fruit, as the difficulties attending the navigation of large ships in those waters entail a good deal more than the usual amount of attention on the part of those in charge, and that circumstance should give our small vessels their opportunity.

Brest and Cherbourg in the Channel should be put in a proper state of organisation for receiving and repairing the battle-ship squadrons or divisions; Lorient and Rochefort on the Atlantic, not to speak of Brest, are admirably placed for becoming central bases from which our cruisers can act. Other ports, which need not be named, ought to be centres for large flotillas of torpedo-boats and submarines, always ready to hurl themselves across the path of hostile squadrons, to harass them, and to render as difficult as possible the blockade of our large naval ports.

In the Mediterranean, in case of war with Great Britain alone, it will doubtless be impossible to avoid fighting, because it is in that sea that the English Admiralty maintain the most powerful of their battle squadrons. The plan of operations which will be adopted by the English fleet is known to us in advance. Its first care would be to blockade our battle squadrons in Toulon, then to keep the Mediterranean free for the transport of troops, which would be directed towards some point in Corsica, Algeria, or Tunis. No one is ignorant of the fact that at the time of the quarrel over Fashoda, a powerful English squadron lay off Gibraltar with the object of preventing our Northern Squadron entering the Mediterranean, while another powerful squadron was held in readiness to blockade Toulon. Being thus assured of the command of the Western basin of the Mediterranean, the English would have been in a position to transport the eighteen thousand men that were concentrated at Malta to any predetermined point. Some people thought that this point would have been the north end of Corsica; others, Algeria or Bizerta, which at that time was almost defenceless. Whatever the real object of the operations might have been, there can be no doubt that it is in the Mediterranean that we shall have to fear the naval operations of Great Britain, because it is there that we are most vulnerable to her attack.

We have therefore to organise our forces in the Mediterranean with the view of meeting the tactics of the English Admiralty. It is necessary that our fleet in the Mediterranean should be strong enough to prevent its being condemned to remain blockaded in Toulon, and it is necessary that Toulon itself should be able to receive help from

outside. Such assistance could hardly come from the Channel or Atlantic, on account of the ease with which an English squadron could bar the Straits of Gibraltar, and it must therefore come from inside the Mediterranean, and it is with this object that the harbour and dockyard at Bizerta have been organised. We ought therefore to assemble at this impregnable base, as soon as we can, a sufficiently strong force, which will keep the enemy blockading Toulon on the *qui vive* for an attack from this quarter, and we shall thus oblige him to divide his forces in order to blockade both places at the same time. In order to maintain this double blockade, England will require many more battle-ships than she can dispose of in the Mediterranean, if we compel her to maintain a force in the Channel by ourselves maintaining a strong offensive force there.

It is pretty generally admitted that to blockade three battle-ships in a harbour, five of equal fighting value are required. If then we have in Toulon two squadrons of first-class battle-ships, that is, 12 ships, England, to maintain an effective blockade, will require 20; if at the same time we have at Bizerta a squadron of 6 battle-ships, England will require another 10 to blockade that port. In order, then, to become mistress of the Western Mediterranean by the blockade of our two ports, England will require 30 first-class battle-ships. It will not be easy to concentrate so large a number of ships; and they will offer to our torpedo-boats, submarines, and submersibles splendid opportunities for attack under the most favourable conditions of sea and weather it is possible to imagine.

If, then, we maintain in the Mediterranean three strong squadrons with a due proportion of destroyers, torpedo-boats, and submarines, divided between Toulon and Bizerta always ready, either to concentrate or divide between the two ports, as seems most desirable, England will never be able to boast of holding the command of the sea for a sufficiently long time to enable her to carry out offensive operations against either Corsica, Algeria, or Tunis, such as the English Admiralty propose to themselves to do.

We ought in the Mediterranean, as in the Channel, to multiply the centres of the *Défenses-Mobiles*. The mild weather, the grey horizons, and the heavy atmosphere which are so often found in that sea are most valuable auxiliaries for submarines and torpedo-boats. We ought always to have a large number of these craft at various points on the Corsican, Algerian, and Tunisian coasts, in addition to those for home defence, and the more numerous they are, the more useful auxiliaries will they be for our battle squadrons.

To sum up, whatever may be the eventuality we have to provide against, whether a war with the Triple Alliance, or one with Great Britain, it is self-evident it is absolutely necessary for France to maintain powerful squadrons, both in the North and the South. The objective alone changes even as the relative importance of the forces to be employed in one or the other sea, the tactics alone have to be modified according as we have to face one or other of these eventualities.

Speaking in a general manner, and without going here into details, we may be permitted to hold the view that our Naval Authorities are right in concentrating, as they have been doing for some time past, all our newest, most powerful, and fastest battle-ships in the Mediterranean, in order to have there a squadron of the first

fighting order, whilst concentrating all the best cruisers in the North.¹

In what concerns our foreign stations, it is useless to insist on the necessity of particularly developing that of the Far East and of the Pacific. They are the most distant from the mother country, and will be the most difficult to reinforce when war breaks out; but it is in the waters of the Far East on the one hand, and in East Africa on the other, that our most important Colonial and political interests lie. Consequently, it is Saigon and at Diego-Suarez which ought to be our best organised and most strongly defended naval bases. It is necessary that we have at both these points dockyards capable of re-victualling and repairing, if need be, not only the ships on those two stations, but also the divisions of cruisers, which we may be compelled to send into Eastern waters during a war with any one of the great Naval Powers.²

¹ By the Decree of the 1st April, 1902, the Minister of Marine completely reorganised the *Défenses-Mobiles* of France, Corsica, and North Africa, in such a way as to render our flotillas of torpedo-boats and submarines far more mobile and efficient. A Vice-Admiral, who is a Member of the Superior Council of the Navy, has been appointed permanent Inspector-General of the *Défenses-Mobiles*, which are now placed under the direct authority and responsibility of the Maritime Prefects.

² By a Decree of 1st April, 1902, the Minister of Marine has completely modified our naval forces in Far Eastern waters. The naval divisions of the Far East, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean, whose fighting value was small, on account of the way they were dispersed, have been replaced by a mobile division of 12 large fast cruisers, destined to cruise together or in divisions, in Eastern waters. The squadron is under the command of a Vice-Admiral, with a Rear-Admiral as Second-in-Command. The Commander of the naval force in Eastern waters has, in addition, under his orders: 1. Twelve gun-boats and despatch-vessels, more particularly detailed for the direct protection of our interests, both in Chinese waters and in those of our Colonies in Indo-China, Madagascar, New Caledonia, etc.; 2. A division of armoured ships in reserve at Saigon; 3. The torpedo-boats, and later on the submarines, stationed at the different bases in Cochin-China and Madagascar.

Resting on Saigon on the one side and Diego Suarez on the other, which are thus joined across the Indian Ocean, this new naval force in the East will increase considerably the power of our flag in those parts of the world.

(To be continued.)