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"Necessary stepping stones..." The Transfer of *Aurora*, *Patriot* and *Patrician* to the Royal Canadian Navy after the First World War

William Schleihauf

It would have been a great satisfaction to those who represent Canada, and, I am sure, to the Canadian people, if ships provided by Canada had taken part in the warfare upon the ocean which has been waged during the past two-and-a-half years.

Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden, 28 March 1917[1]

Canadians seem to have difficulty in understanding the importance of naval forces in the defence of their nation. Twice in the early years Canada took the first steps towards the creation of a useful fleet, but then lost interest. The acquisition of *Niobe* and *Rainbow* for training the nascent Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in 1910 was a good beginning, but even before the First World War broke out in 1914, the government's priorities changed. A second, more promising start was made immediately after the end of hostilities. In the spring of 1919, hesitant discussions began which led to the commissioning of His Majesty's Canadian Ships *Aurora*, *Patriot* and *Patrician* in November 1920. But why were these particular three chosen, and were they of any value?

Sir Robert Borden had brushed up against naval affairs several times during his political career, most notably during the pre-war controversy over the degree to which Canadians should become involved in the naval defence of the Empire. Then, he and the Conservative Party had been strongly in favour of a naval contribution, but that was not to be – hence the wry statement during the March 1917 Imperial War Conference. In 1918, the Dominion prime ministers again travelled to the UK to attend the Imperial War Cabinet. Although enthusiastic about naval *co-operation*, they were opposed to the Admiralty's idea of a single Imperial navy. Borden, on behalf of his colleagues, suggested that an Admiralty adviser visit each country in turn.[2] In September 1918 the Admiralty agreed to send a representative "as early as convenient" after the war's end,[3] which led to the dispatch of Admiral Lord Jellicoe on his Empire Mission in February 1919.[4]

Meanwhile, Borden was in Paris, attending the Peace Conference. In April 1919, he wrote from the Hotel Majestic, asking if the Royal Navy would be interested in Canada taking over a battleship, cruisers, and the requisite number of destroyers and submarines,[5] a very sizeable 'fleet unit', in fact. This was not the first time that thoughts of capital ships had entranced Canadian politicians. Had Borden's 1912 Naval Aid Bill passed, Canada would have built three battleships for the Royal Navy, improved versions of the famous *Queen Elizabeth* class (designs 'U1' or 'U2'[6]), perhaps named *Acadia*, *Québec* and *Ontario*.[7] It must also be remembered that a battlecruiser (*New Zealand*) and a modern battleship (*Malaya*) had been donated by the two dominions, and the Australians had been keen enough to build a battlecruiser for their own navy. It was not

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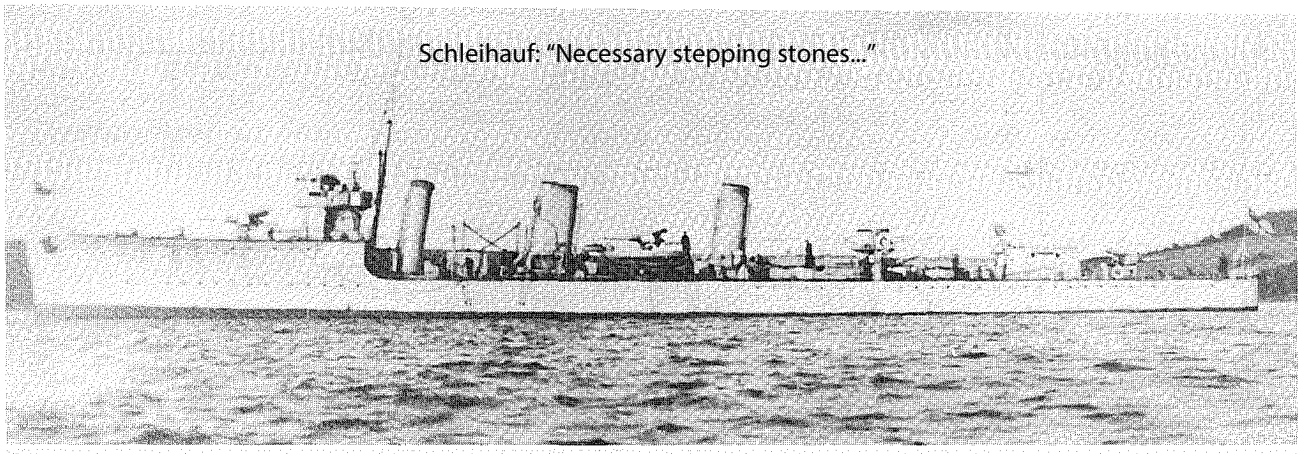
Aurora *in profile, April 1921. The arrangement of the armament is clearly seen: 6-inch guns immediately forward and aft, with three 4-inch guns on either broadside. The gun without a shield forward of the after 6-inch gun is the 4-inch HA. Between the two is a dome-shaped structure, probably a shelter for the gun crews. The starboard torpedo tubes are the dark objects, one pair beside the 4-inch HA, the other abaft the davits. When examined under magnification, this photo also shows the after visual range dial mounted below the rangefinder on the platform, between the curved searchlight control positions. Two men are working on top of the centre funnel.*

unrealistic, then, for the Canadians of 1919 to contemplate the acquisition of powerful men-of-war.[8]

The Admiralty were quick to agree. In May 1919, they suggested that the RCN take possession (gratis) of one battlecruiser (HMS *Indomitable*), 3 *Arethusa* class light cruisers, 1 *Marksman* class flotilla leader (i.e. large destroyer), 8 'S' class destroyers, and 4 'L' class submarines, additional to the 2 'H' class boats already presented.[9] With the exception of *Indomitable*, this was not a collection of discards but a potent and well-balanced mix of modern ships that had been kept up with war experience. As for the battlecruiser, the very second to be laid down anywhere, she was a close match to HMAS *Australia*, and the British did not have a surplus of more modern types. The RN's Director of Plans did note that HMS *Tiger* would be more suitable for the RCN as she was of a more recent design, and had a better fuel endurance,[10] but the Admiralty officials knew that the RCN would be "in the nature of a training service for some years to come,"[11] and somewhat less tactfully, that it would take some time before any vessels handed over to the Canadians would be "of much real value."[12] Overall, it was preferable to stick with the offer of *Indomitable*, which could be replaced by *Tiger* when the RCN became efficient.[13]

Nevertheless, the Admiralty's proposal was undoubtably too ambitious. The annual running cost, even if they kept to Canadian waters, was estimated to be £1,327,000.[14] And the cost in manpower was staggering: *Indomitable* alone would have needed some 800.[15] The difficulties went beyond sheer numbers, because *Dreadnought*-era ships required a much greater percentage of experienced and/or specialised men than did those of the generation of *Niobe* and *Rainbow*.[16] Considering officers only, at war's end, the RCN proper had a mere 62 officers between sub-lieutenant and lieutenant-commander, and of the eight latter, all but two were ex-RN.[17] This was not enough to run the battlecruiser. The Admiralty sent a telegram in August asking if Canada wanted to take any ships, but although Borden was in favour of the overall idea, the specifics would have to wait until discussed with Earl Jellicoe.[18]

Admiral Jellicoe arrived in Canada on the 8th of November, 1919. He was quick to note the dissention amongst Canadian politicians,



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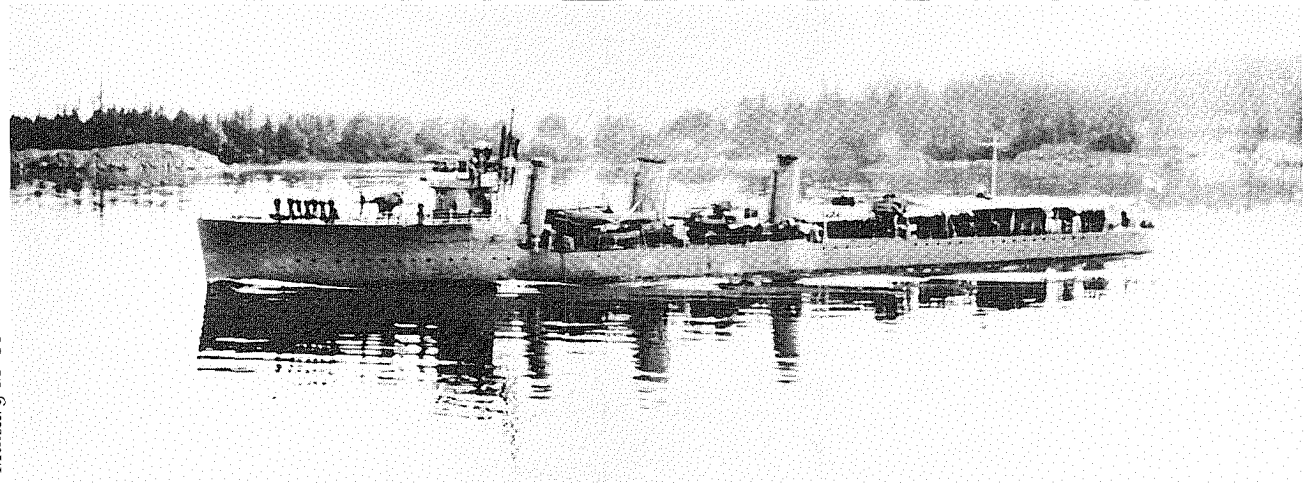

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***Top**: HMCS* Patriot *in the Bras D'or Lakes, 1922. The gun on the bandstand abaft the third funnel is a 2-pounder pompom.* ***Above**: HMCS* Patrician *leaving Esquimalt.*

some of whom were ardent navalists, many others opposed to the very idea of a Canadian navy. Even Colonel Charles Ballantyne, the Minister of the Naval Service, recognised that the RCN as currently equipped was a "pure waste of money."[19] In the report that he presented to the Governor General on the 31st of December, Jellicoe suggested that simply for local defence, a force of three light cruisers, one flotilla of destroyers and eight submarines would suffice. If, however, the Canadians wished to co-operate in Empire defence, then one or two fleet units would be best, each comprising a battlecruiser, an aircraft carrier, two light cruisers, six destroyers, and four submarines, along with the requisite number of minesweepers and support ships.[20] Jellicoe also queried the Admiralty about the types of ships which were on offer. Everything and anything, from the first dreadnought battleships and battlecruisers, down through monitors, older cruisers, swarms of destroyers and torpedo boats, and large numbers of smaller craft could be had just by asking, but the deadline was the 31st of January, 1920.[21] The Canadians were quick to ask for an extension to allow for discussion in Parliament (recessed until the 20th of February). Specifically, they expressed interest in a light cruiser, a flotilla leader and four destroyers, eight patrol boats and six submarines:[22] a realistic beginning. By the 23rd of March, the RCN's ambitions had been trimmed down to just a light cruiser and two destroyers.[23] The reason, as presented to the House of Commons, was that no permanent Canadian policy had as yet been determined, and so the pre-war policy of a small training cadre was being continued.[24] The Admiralty agreed immediately, and on the 22nd of April informed Ottawa that a light cruiser of the *Bristol* class and two 'M' class destroyers would be provided.[25] (For a list of available light cruisers and their characteristics, see Table 1 on next page.)

The selection of specific ships was to be problematic, particularly in the case of the cruiser. On the 16th of April 1920, the Vice-Admiral Commanding, Reserve Fleet (VACRF) was instructed by the Admiralty to choose "a Light Cruiser of the *Bristol* Class (other than HMS *Bristol* herself) and also two Destroyers (sister ships) of the latest type on the Suspense list which are in the most serviceable condition."[28] HM Ships *Glasgow*, *Talisman* and *Termagant* had been selected by the 28th.[29]

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Table 1 - Modern Classes of British Light Cruisers, 1919 [26, 27]

Class	Date	Displacement (tons)	Armament	Speed (knots)	Fuel	Complement
Boadicea	1907-1908	3,800	8 or 10 - 4" 2 - 18" TT mines	25	mixed	317
Blonde	1909	3,850	9 - 4" 2 - 21" TT mines	24 ½	mixed	314
Bristol	1909	5,300	2 - 6" 10 - 4" 2 - 18" TT	25	mixed	480
Weymouth	1910	5,800	8 - 6" 2 - 21" TT	25	mixed	475
Active	1910-1911	4,000	8 - 4" 2 - 18"	25	mixed	325
Chatham	1911*	6,000	8 - 6" 2 - 21" TT	25 ½	mixed	475
Birmingham	1912**	6,040	9 - 6" 2 - 21" TT	25 ½	mixed	480
Arethusa	1912-1913	4,400	3 - 6" 4 - 4" 8 - 21" TT or 2 - 6" 6 - 4" 8 - 21" TT	28 ½	oil	282
Caroline	1913-1914	4,733	4 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	28 ½	oil	301
Calliope	1914	4,695	4 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	29 ½	oil	368
Birkenhead	1914	5,845	10 - 5.5" 2 - 21" TT	25 ½	1 mixed, 1 oil	450 - 500
Cambrian	1914-1915	4,799	4 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	28 ½	oil	368
Centaur	1915	4,870	5 - 6" 2 - 21" TT	29	oil	437
Caledon	1916	4,950	5 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	29	oil	400
Ceres	1916	5,020	5 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	29	oil	460
Capetown	1917-1918	5,250	5 - 6" 8 - 21" TT	29	oil	432
Danae	1916-1918	5,870	6 - 6" 12 - 21" TT	29	oil	450
Cavendish	1916-1918	12,190	7 - 7.5" 6 - 21" TT	31	mixed	712
Emerald	1918	9,450	7 - 6" 12 - 21" TT	33	oil	450

Date: is the range of laying-down dates for the ships of the class.
Displacement: full load or deep.
Armament: main low-angle weapons only, ca. 1919. TT = torpedo tubes.
Speed: maximum.
Fuel: "mixed" meant both oil and coal fired, in some classes the oil fuel being a high-speed supplement only.
Complement: as designed - invariably larger by the end of the war.

* HMAS Brisbane was laid down in Australia in 1913

** HMAS Adelaide was laid down in Australia in 1915

However, VACRF was not aware that those two destroyers, along with eight others, had already been earmarked for other purposes,[30] and so the Admiralty were informed on 3 May of his second pick of *Patrician* and *Patriot*.[31] Ottawa was told, via the Colonial Office, on the 25th of May 1920.[32]

Light cruiser *Glasgow* (*Bristol* class) was a 1909 design built to out-gun existing German light cruisers. She burned oil as well as coal (which was also an integral part of her protective scheme), and her cramped layout had precluded many of the wartime modifications.[33] By 1919 she was at best obsolescent. Captain Walter Hose

RCN, the Naval Assistant to the Minister of the Naval Service, was less than impressed. First, he was of the opinion that a more effective small force would be a flotilla of six destroyers and a flotilla leader.[34] Secondly, if the RCN was to receive a light cruiser, then she ought to be a modern, fully oil-burning, one. The Minister agreed, and on June 13, the British would be asked to provide one in place of *Glasgow*.[35]

Hose himself was sent to the UK to oversee the takeover of the ex-RN ships. While there, he pressed the case for an oil-fuelled light cruiser. He presented a memorandum in which it was pointed out that:[36]

- because the *Bristol*s were obsolescent in both construction and equipment, much of the crew's training would be useless when they were serving in other ships
- learning how to stoke with coal was a complete waste of time as almost all modern vessels were oil-fired only
- a coal-burning cruiser would force Canada to spend money on fuel depots and equipment of no value to any Imperial ship whereas common supply requirements were considerably more economical
- British ships would be able to integrate a modern counterpart much more effectively
- a modern light cruiser in the RCN in full commission could reduce the number of cruisers the RN would have to retain

In short, it was in the interest of both parties that Canada should receive a ship more modern than HMS *Glasgow*. These points were discussed with Admiral Sir Osmond Brock, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff on June 15th. The Admiralty concurred, but noted that they had only a handful of oil-burning light cruisers in reserve (see Table 2). The First Sea Lord, Admiral Beatty, suggested on the 23rd of June that one of the *Arethusa* class would meet "Canada's very reasonable wish."[37]

Royalist and *Aurora* were the two top choices. In addition to the obvious

Table 2 - RN Oil-burning Light Cruisers in Reserve, June 1920[38]

Class	Ship	Remarks
'C'	Conquest	required large repairs
	Curaçoa	required large repairs
	Canterbury	tender to the Gunnery School
	Champion	tender to the Torpedo School
Arethusa	Penelope	undergoing large refit
	Undaunted	due for annual refit
	Phaeton	defects - date of completion mid-August
	Aurora	
	Galatea	due for annual refit
	Royalist	

cold weather requirements, winter training in the Caribbean meant being capable of working in tropical conditions.[39] *Royalist* had been fitted out for the former, but that equipment had been removed by the summer of 1920.[40] *Aurora* would not only need the necessary heating arrangements, but as she was bereft of cooling machinery, would require the installation of three 20,000 BTU cooling plants, two for the magazines and one for the cold store.[41] Mechanically, *Aurora* was in slightly better shape, her boilers being good for another ten years, the boiler tubes for three, vice four years and one year respectively for *Royalist*.[42] Initially, Hose favoured *Royalist*, perhaps because she carried three 6-inch guns, instead of the two in *Aurora*.[43] However, no doubt after he had been informed of the state of the boilers, he would inform the Admiralty on the 9th of August that

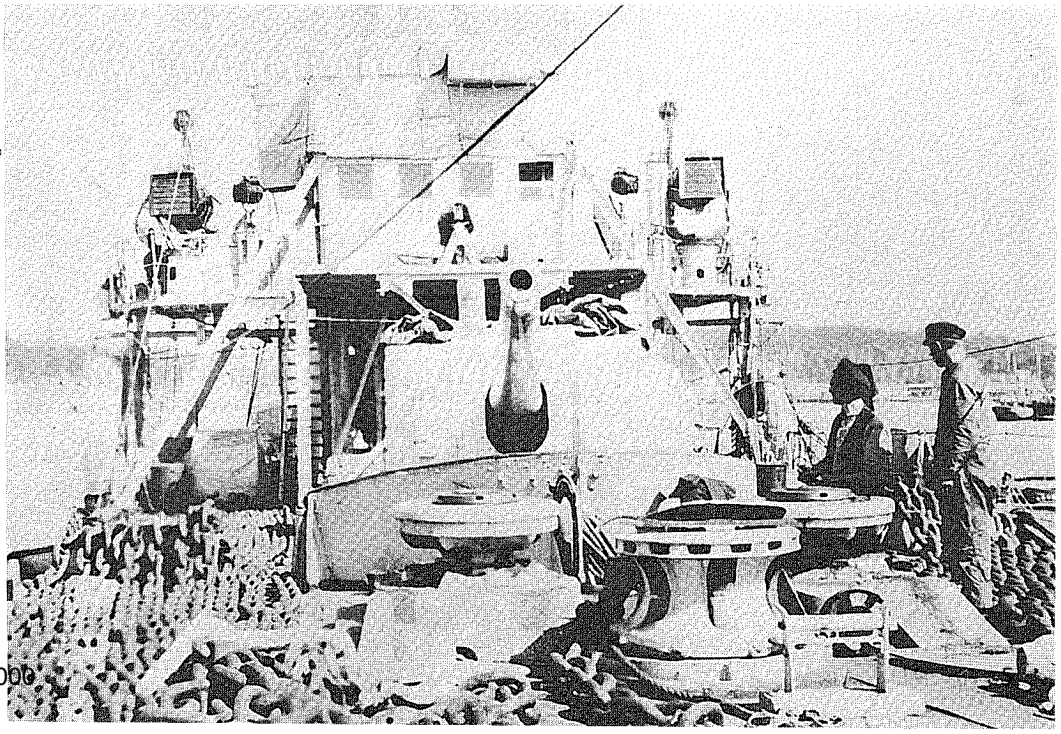

Photo courtesy Marc Milner

The forward gun mount and bridge of HMCS Aurora.

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Table 3 - Ships' Particulars [45, 46, 47, 48, 49]

	Aurora	Patrician / Patriot
Class	Arethusa	'M' Class, "Thornycroft Specials"
Builder	Devonport Dockyard	Thornycroft
Turbines	Parsons	Brown-Curtis
Launched	30 September 1913	20 April 1916 / 5 June 1916
Completed	5 September 1914	June 1916 / August 1916
Displacement	3,945 tons (average normal) 4,410 tons (average deep)	985 tons
Length Overall	436 feet	271 feet
Beam	39 feet	27 ½ feet
Draught	15 ½ feet	11 feet
Guns	2 - 6" BL Mark III, 94 rounds per gun 6 - 4" QF Mk V, 200 rounds per gun 1 - 4" QF Mk V on H/A mounting	3 - 4" QF Mark IV, 120 rounds per gun 1 - 2pdr pompom, 1000 rounds per gun
Torpedoes	8 - 21"	4 - 21"
Speed	29 knots	35.6 / 37.3 knots (both trial speeds)
Fuel	810 tons oil (max) 5000 miles at 16 knots	270 tons 2000 miles at 16 knots
Complement	318	84
Miscellaneous	- could carry 74 mines if 4 torpedo tubes removed (equipment removed December 1918) - fitted with a flying-off platform for aircraft	- at least Patrician was fitted with paravanes for both anti-submarine and anti-mine work as of August 1918 - in 1917, Patriot was fitted for a kite balloon
(best estimates have been used to reconcile differences between sources)		

he had received instructions to accept *Aurora* in place of *Glasgow* for the Royal Canadian Navy.[44] [The specifics of the ships are shown in Table 3 above.]

The ships were a gift to Canada, including all permanent equipment on board. The Canadian government was responsible for all running costs from the date of their commissioning into the RCN, as well as any refit and alterations that were to be done.[50] All three had seen a good deal of service during WW1: *Aurora* with the Harwich Force, including damage at the Battle of the Dogger Bank (for which she received her sole Great War Battle Honour[51]); the two destroyers with the Grand Fleet. HMS *Patriot* sank *U69*, spotted at a distance of 28 miles by an observer aloft in her kite balloon.[52] Not surprisingly, they needed a certain amount of reconditioning before they were ready to recommission. The cost to make *Patriot* and *Patrician* seaworthy was estimated to be £6,105 and £5,792 respectively, the work taking about four weeks.[53] A more complete job, "making good all defects necessary to make vessel an efficient fighting unit" would require an additional week of work, and cost an extra £1,216 and £818 [see Table 4 on the next page].[54] The Dockyard was instructed to proceed with the second option.[55] In September, Ottawa would be asked for an additional £887 to acquire a complete set of awnings and associated equipment for each destroyer[56] no doubt in preparation for their winter training in the West Indies.

The initial estimate of work for *Aurora* [Table 5] was £10,495 exclusive of machinery, but the

total would finally come to £17,780 (£7,820 of that being the cost of fitting all the required cooling facilities).[58]

The work was done, and the ships commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy while at Portsmouth, on Monday 1 November, 1920. Most of the officers were RCN:[60]

Aurora

Captain Henry G.H. Adams, CBE RN
Engineer-Commander John F. Bell, OBE RN
Paymaster Lieutenant-Commander John G. Elgar, DSC RN
Lieutenant-Commander Edmund G. Hallewell, RCN (1st Lieut & (T))
Lieutenants: Leonard W. Murray, RCN (N)
Douglas B. Moffat, RCN
Frederick G. Hart, RCN
Hubert J.F. Hibbard, RCN
Sub-Lieutenant Harold T.W. Grant, RCN
Engineer-Lieutenant Ninian C. Bannatyne, RCN
Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant Marie J.R.O. Cossette, RCN
Warrant Engineer James W. Keohane, RCN
Warrant Shipwright Charles H. Brown, RCN
Surgeon-Lieutenant Albert G. Laroche, MD RCN
Gunner (T) William A. Vinnicombe[61]

Patriot

Lieutenant Charles T. Beard, RCN (in command)
Lieutenant Ronald I. Agnew, RCN (N)
Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Angus D.M. Curry, RCN
Gunner (T) Michael Spillane[62]

Table 4 - Work Required for Patrician and Patriot [57]

	Work Required to Make Seaworthy	Work Required for an Efficient Fighting Unit
Captain of Dockyard's Department	Renew or repair all standing and running rigging and guard wires.	Renew hatchway and chart table, hoods, motor boat canopies, weather cloths and roof of fore bridge, ash shoot, cover of sorts, and signal locker screens; overhaul cocoa nut matting.
Hull	Dock vessel, clean and coat bottom, renew zincs as necessary, and repair underwater fittings, repack rudder gland; repair fire-hearth, side scuttles, ventilators, WT Hatches, and skylights over boiler and engine rooms, running in and out gear to boats' davits, guard rail stanchions, all W.C.'s and heads, soil pipes, pumps, stoves and stove funnelling, capstan, and steering arrangements, cable compressor, oil fuel tank, pipes of fresh and salt water services, suction valves, freshwater tanks, bridge screen, chart table, lockers, mess tables and stools, examine and repair mast fittings as necessary and paint ship.	Fair bulges in side plating, renew corticine on upper deck, survey hull, including portion under brick pans of boilers.
Machinery	Examine propellers and shafting, refit all underwater fittings, re-joint cylinder covers, and re-pack glands of all auxiliary engines and pumps, open out drill and water test boilers, renew zinc slabs and prepare boilers for steaming, repair brick work, remove brickpans for survey of plates and frames, make good flooring brickwork, renew all inner rings of air tubes and 50% of outer rings, repair and refit draught doors on boiler fronts, also doors to air supply trunks, renew funnel guys, repair funnel ladders, attend trials &c. Lift all 4" guns and mountings for examination of pivots, refit firing, elevating and training gear, jack up torpedo tubes for examination of rollers, refit training gear, test gunsights.	Nothing additional.
Electrical	To overhaul all lighting circuits throughout ship including navigation lights, all main circuits in boiler rooms to rewire, and fit several new fittings. To overhaul two ventilating fans and repair insulation. To test and renew in part, bell circuits.	Rewire flexible leads of all gun circuits, fire control night sight, loading lights, and searchlights, and re-insulate junction boxes etc as necessary; rewire flexible leads of torpedo E. P. firing circuits, refit push and junction boxes, effect slight repairs to dynamo and switchboards. In addition to the foregoing "Patrician" requires rewiring of torpedo control circuit, and refitting of all instruments, etc.

Table 5 - Work Required for Aurora [59]

Hull	-ship to be docked and hull coated -ship painted internally and externally in wake of additions and repairs -tail shafts drawn and wear gauged -underwater fittings examined and refitted as necessary -zincs removed as necessary -complete the equipment of davits -an additional ladder to be fitted -stowage to be provided for two skiff dinghies -provide working positions on lower deck for the forward magazine flooding arrangements -additional ventilation supply to be fitted to Body Room, Slop Room, Provision Room, Issue Room, Gunner and Gunner (T) Storerooms -deck plates and fittings complete with cowls to be fitted to Captain's Cabin; Wardroom; Warrant Officers' Mess; CPO's and Engineroom Artificers' Messes -ladderway and weather shelter to be fitted over torpedo-transporting hatch -duplicate voice pipes to be fitted from Bridge to Lower Conning Position and to Upper Steering Position -cowls to be fitted over Engineer's Office -store rooms to be altered and modified for Central Storekeeping -oil fuel galley suitable for General Messing to be fitted -kitchen to be restored to original dimensions and completed with all necessary fittings -cold storage rooms, with necessary machinery and tanks to be fitted- to use either ammonia or CO2 -aeroplane platform to be shortened -"Cumberland's" method of protection to be fitted to boilers -Director Top to be secured independent of topmast -a light steel canopy to be fitted over the after 6" Gun Shelter -mess decks to be fitted with racks for Sennet Hats [it was eventually decided to do without these racks]
Machinery	-boilers to be drilled and tested and trepanned -oil fuel tank heating system to be connected and tested -magazine cooling plant to be fitted and tested -spare gear to be completed as requisite -spare brass, cast iron and white metal for repairs to be provided -30 spare cones for boilers provided -connections on fire mains and ventilation supply to be renewed as necessary
Armament	-to raise Director Sight 7" by brass liner -loading sights to be fitted to all guns -Chadburn's Visual Range Dial (already supplied) to be fitted on the After Control position -Gun Ready boxes to be fitted at the Director
Electrical	-an armature in the Port Dynamo was burnt out and to be re-wound -revolution telegraphs tested and made efficient -engine-room navy-phones to be tested and made efficient -all electrical fittings, motors, wiring, etc to be tested, defects made good as requisite -switchboard to be tested and arranged so that dynamos can be put into parallel with safety -electrical revolution indicators to be re-fitted and made reliable -electric heaters in cabins to be tested and repaired as necessary

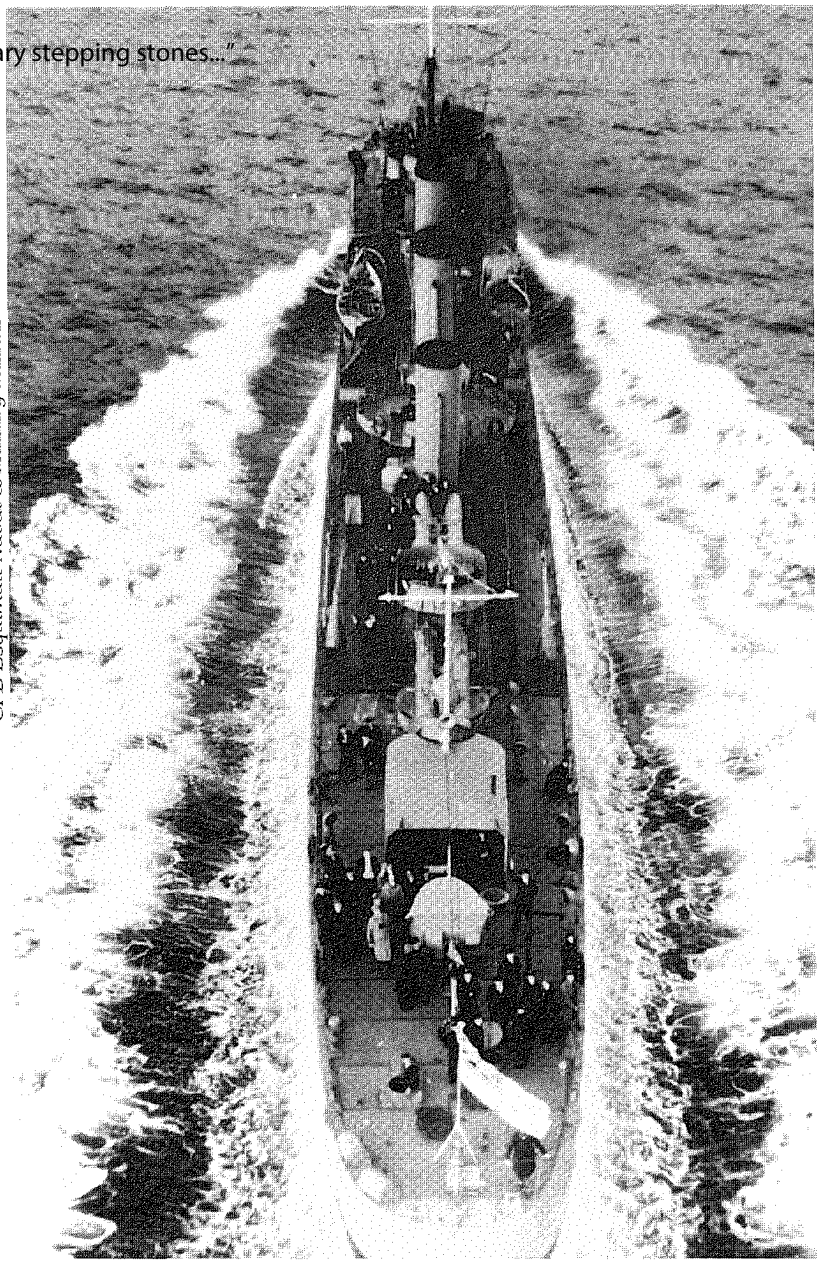
Patrician

Lieutenant George C. Jones, RCN (in command)
Lieutenant Arthur R. Pressy, RCN
Engineer Lieutenant George L. Stephens, RCN
Gunner (T) Walter G. Smith[63]

Most of the ratings were from Canada, but there had been difficulty in recruiting Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers, although eventually this was solved by the raising of the age limits to 45 years of age.[64] An interesting side-note is that recruiting might have been aided by official instructions from the Minister of the Naval Service finally authorizing the traditional rum ration for the lower deck and liquor in the Officers' messes.[65]

The Canadian squadron departed for Halifax (via the Azores and Bermuda) at 0800 hours on 1 December 1920.[66] Despite bad weather, minor defects and some unscheduled delay, they arrived in Halifax on the 21 December, where they were inspected by the Governor General (the Duke of Devonshire), the Minister of the Naval Service, and Captain Hose.[67] The latter was quite pleased with the appearance and deportment of the two destroyers (even though *Patrician* seems to have bumped into the light cruiser!), but was decidedly less so with the state of *Aurora*: filthy mess decks; men out of uniform and the ropes and falls for the ships boats "tangled masses".[68] More important was the question of how the ships had held up during

the long crossing. Captain Adams noted that *Aurora* was a good seaboat, although very wet – enough so as to make it difficult to fight the guns on the weather side.[69] The three ships were inspected in January 1921, when it was found that the condition of *Aurora* was quite good. *Patrician* was in better shape than *Patriot* (whose regular maintenance had been neglected to a certain extent), neither showing signs of serious corrosion. However, the light construction of that generation of destroyers meant that they were unable to withstand much wastage and so every opportunity must be taken to perform routine preservation work. The destroyers were in all respects stable and seaworthy. However, there had been significant increases in top weight to *Aurora* (tripod mast, Director, flying off platform, 4-inch anti-aircraft gun, 4 additional torpedoes tubes and their torpedoes, paravanes, etc) that will have reduced her margin of stability. *Aurora*'s main engines were satisfactory, but she burnt an unexpectedly large amount of fuel during the crossing (4 miles per ton at 11 to 12 knots) – her design seems to have been arranged "without any consideration for economical working, but rather for constant high speed



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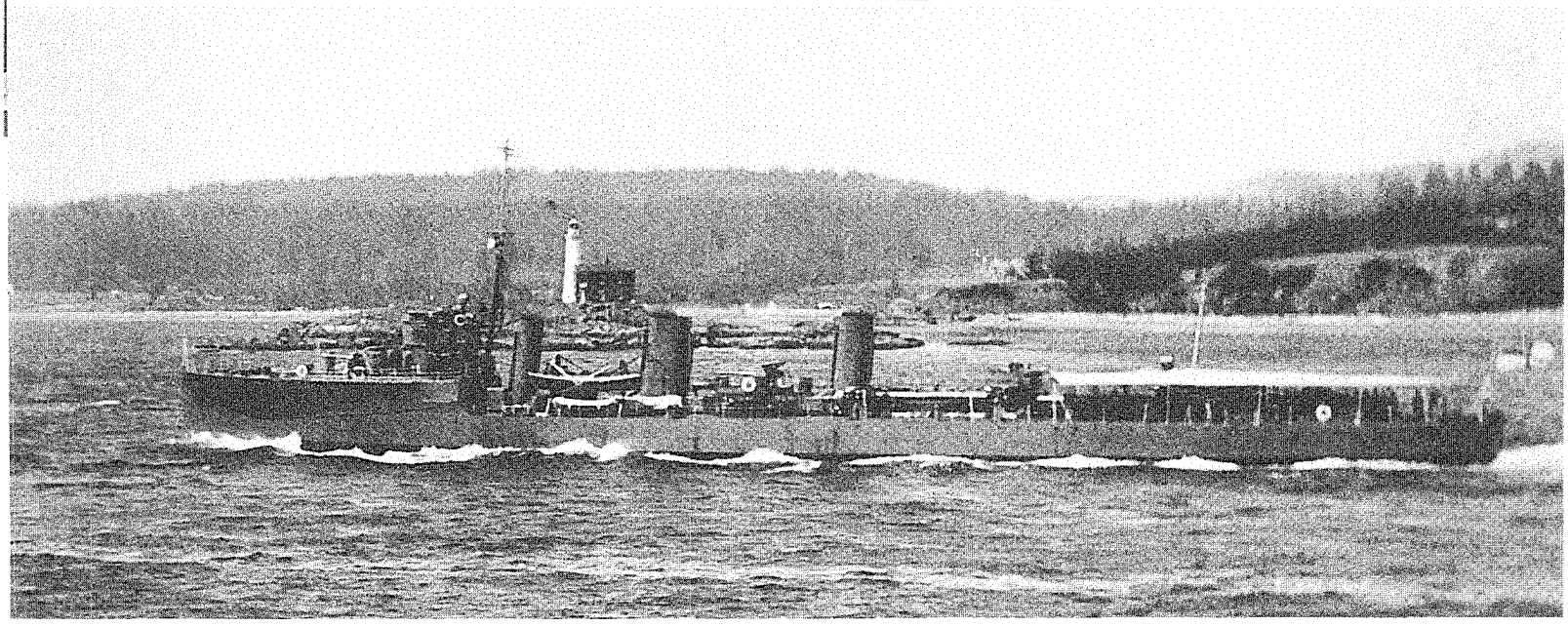
***Right**: A gorgeous shot of HMCS* Patriot *making 23 knots near Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in 1923. Two depth charges are visible immediately to port of the ensign staff. Everyone seems quite interested in the aircraft (?) taking the photo - including the several men in civilian dress.*
***Below**: HMCS* Patrician.



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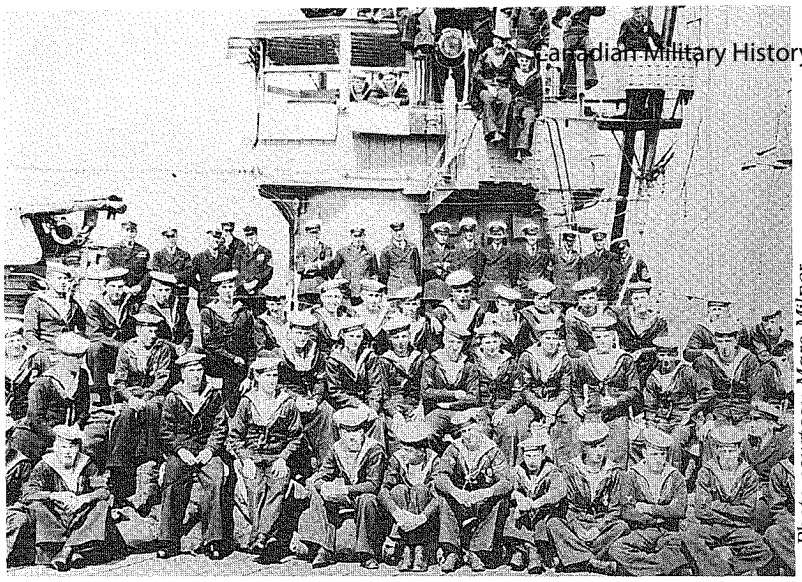

Photo courtesy Marc Milner

Ship's Company, HMCS Patrician, c.1923.

running, at which...the consumption is not unreasonable." The endurance of the destroyers (at 11 knots, 9 miles per ton for *Patrician* and 8 miles per ton for *Patriot*) was considered satisfactory and well within the design of their class. However, this could be improved when minor leaks were repaired and auxiliary machinery overhauled. They were also economical at high speed.[70]

The inspection of *Aurora* also questioned the need for her having cruising turbines and suggested various ways of improving fuel economy, some of which would have left her capable of only 20 knots.[71] Reasonable perhaps, had she been built as a training vessel, but from the start, she was intended to be a *fighting* ship – and thus the high speed endurance was in fact a credit to her designers.

The Canadian Squadron were the inheritors of various pieces of mess silver that had originally been given to HMCS *Rainbow* and *Niobe*.[72] *Aurora*, with the permission of Queen Mary, would also receive the silk White Ensign that she had given to *Niobe* upon her commissioning into the RCN in 1910.[73]

In 1921, the Squadron showed what the RCN could do, when given the chance. They travelled to Esquimalt and back, via the Panama Canal, touring a number of the islands in the Caribbean and making diplomatic stops in Panama, El Salvador, Mexico, and Costa Rica.[74] *Aurora* alone conducted seven days of gunnery practice between January and November, firing a total of 63 rounds of 6-inch and 150 rounds of 4-inch,[75] (the 1918 RN standard was 24 rounds per gun[76]) with "creditable" progress and efficiency.[77] In February 1921, they had exercised with the 8th Light Cruiser Squadron, the Rear-Admiral Commanding noting the keenness of the Canadians, and the quality of the officers and men.[78] *Patrician* in particular performed well at the admittedly elementary gunnery practices.[79] One year later, the guns crews had improved their drill and the fire control organisation was "working well."[80]

Alas, by April 1922, it would be all over. That sad chronicle is beyond the scope of this article – suffice it to say that it was decided to decommission *Aurora*, so as to keep the two destroyers in (reduced) operation and create a naval reserve. The Canadian Squadron were back in Halifax on 11 April 1922.[81] *Patrician* and *Patriot* would soldier on until 1929. *Aurora* slowly decayed alongside Jetty 5 in Halifax, until sold for scrap August 1927 to Mr. A. A. Larocque of Sorel, being broken up by Sorel Mechanical Ships Limited in 1928.[82] A cheque for £9,890-19-4 (the sale of *Aurora* plus submarines *CH 14* and *CH 15*, less sundry expenses)[83] was given to the Admiralty, it being agreed that because the ships were a gift from the UK intended to increase the efficiency of the RCN, the money for them should be returned.[84] The monies from the two destroyers would likewise go to the Admiralty (*Patriot* fetched £3,110 from Thomas W. Ward, Ltd).[85]

It is unfortunate that HMC Ships *Aurora*, *Patrician* and *Patriot* are sometimes given short shrift in Canadian naval historiography: they were a very good answer to the naval needs of the day. From a purely fighting standpoint, one of Jellicoe's fleet units would have been a potent and balanced force commensurate with the responsibilities of the Dominion. Of course, politically and economically, a navy of that size would be impossible until after the Second World War. For a beginning navy intent on training, the three ships were ideal. Above all, they were cheap: a mere £32,000 (near $150,000 Canadian) spent on refits, when *Aurora* cost about £285,000[86] new, and the 'S' class destroyers built at the end of the war came off the ways at some £191,000 a piece.[87] Like any four to six year old vehicle, they needed some repair work, but despite wartime service, were in overall good condition. Most importantly, they were up-to-date with all the latest developments, something critical for a training squadron.

Despite Hose's misgivings, *Aurora* provided facilities that destroyers alone could not. Satisfactory specialist training could not be had in the destroyers,[88] and *Aurora* was fitted with modern gunnery instruments: Dreyer Fire Control Table; Director (which probably had the gyro-stabilised Henderson Gear); and the requisite equipment for concentration fire.[89] Combined with the two submarines, the RCN had the necessary stepping stones (except naval aircraft) towards the building of a modern and effective navy. Unfortunately, neither the public nor political will was there.

Notes

1. *Minutes of the Imperial War Conference, 4th Day*, 28 March 1917, quoted in Nicholas Tracy (editor), *The Collective Naval Defence of the Empire, 1900-1940* (Ashgate and the Navy Records Society, 1997), p.229.
2. Letter from Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden to Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the Admiralty, 15 August 1918, quoted in A. Temple Patterson (editor) *The Jellicoe Papers, volume II 1916-1935* (Navy Records Society, 1968), pp.286-287.
3. Draft Admiralty Memorandum for the War Cabinet, September 1918, *The Collective Naval Defence of the Empire*, p.233.
4. *The Jellicoe Papers, volume II*, p.266.
5. Letter from Sir Robert Borden to Lord Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 April 1919. This holding, entitled "Canadian Naval Forces. Transfer of HM Ships AURORA, PATRICIA and PATROL [sic]" contains quite a bit of correspondence from the British viewpoint. Public Record Office, Kew, UK [PRO] Admiralty [ADM] 1/8587/80.
6. Keith McBride, "On the Brink of Armageddon" in John Roberts (editor) *Warship 1995* (Conway Maritime Press, 1995), p.62.
7. Letter from Prime Minister Robert Borden to Winston Churchill, 2 November 1912, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa [DHH] ADM 116/3485.
8. HMS *Canada*, originally the Chilean battleship *Almirante Latorre*, was an entirely British warship. Nevertheless, it is surely not co-incidental that three of the eleven RCN midshipmen shown in the November 1918 *Navy List* were serving in her.
9. Letter from the Admiralty to Sir Robert Borden, 16 May 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
10. Minute dated 7 June 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
11. Minute from "J. A. F.", 11 June 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
12. Minute from the Deputy 1st Sea Lord, dated 28/4/19, quoted by "D.O.D.(F)", 8 June 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
13. D.O.D.(F) 8 June 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
14. Letter from the Admiralty to Sir Robert Borden, 16 May 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
15. Her complement as a private ship, in 1914, was 781 officers and men: R. A. Burt, *British Battleships of World War One* (Naval Institute Press, 1986), p.46.
16. Nicholas A. Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p.113.
17. Extracted from the November 1918 *Navy List* ("corrected to October 18th, 1918"), a copy of which may be found on the Internet at: <http://www.ukans.edu/~kansite/ww_one/naval/rcnlist.htm>
18. Telegram of 21 August 1919 from the First Lord to the Governor General (the Duke of Devonshire) through Viscount Milner and the reply from the Governor General 29 August 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
19. Jellicoe to Walter Long, First Lord of the Admiralty, 3 December 1919, quoted in *The Jellicoe Papers, volume II*, p.369.
20. *Report on the Mission to Canada*, 31st December 1919, quoted in *The Jellicoe Papers, volume III*, p.375. See also Gilbert Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada, volume I* (King's Printer, 1952), pp.310-316.
21. Minutes by Charles Hardy 21 + 25 October 1919; telegram #77 from Jellicoe 2 December 1919; telegram #855 from Admiralty to Jellicoe 4 December 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
22. Telegram from the Governor General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 December 1919, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
23. Telegram from Colonel Ballantyne to Admiral Jellicoe, 23 March 1920 PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
24. C. H. Brown, *Brief History of HMCS Aurora*, 23 January 1962, DHH *Aurora* "8000" File.
25. Telegram #46 to Naval Headquarters, Ottawa 22 April 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
26. Taken from Robert Gardiner (editor), *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1906-1921*, Conway Maritime Press, 1985 (reprinted 1997), pp.50-62.
27. Armament details supplemented from: Technical History Section, Admiralty, CB 1515(34) (later OU 6171/20) *The Technical History and Index, Part 34, Alteration in Armaments of H. M. Ships During the War*, May 1920, pp.4-8, Admiralty Library, Ministry of Defence, London, United Kingdom [ADML]. Sorting out the myriad changes done to the "Arethusas" and 'C' classes is difficult, to say the least!
28. Telegram 16 April 1920 to VACRF, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
29. Telegram #230 from COMRESERVE Portsmouth to Admiralty, 28 April 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
30. Admiralty to VACRF, 29 April 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
31. VACRF to Admiralty, 3 May 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
32. Admiralty to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 25 May 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
33. D. K. Brown, *The Grand Fleet*, Naval Institute Press, 1999, p.63.
34. Notes on the CBC programme "The Navy Looks Back," 8 May 1960, in which Rear-Admiral Hose was interviewed, DHH *Aurora* "8000" File.
35. Telegram from the Governor General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 June 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
36. Memorandum from Hose, 16 June 1920, quoted by George Perly to Walter Long, PRO ADM 1/8587/80. A copy can be found in the National Archives of Canada [NAC] RG 24 Series D-1-a, volume 5632, File 31-9-1.
37. Memorandum in Beatty's hand, 23 June 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
38. List attached to memorandum of 22 June 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.

39. Memo from D. O. D. 29 June 1920, summarising Hose's visit, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
40. Memo from D. D. R. 7 July 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
41. Memo 12 July 1920, written on behalf of the Engineer-in-Chief, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
42. *Ibid.*
43. CB 1515(34) *Alteration in Armaments of H. M. Ships During the War*, p.7.
44. Letter from Hose to the Admiralty, 9 August 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
45. Alan Pearsall, "Arethusa Class Cruisers Part 2" in Robert Gardiner (editor) *Warship volume VIII* (Conway Maritime Press, 1984), pp.261-265.
46. Edgar J. March, *British Destroyers* (Seeley Service & Co, 1966), pp.143-150, 174-179. Although this book has serious flaws in its telling of the development and design history of the British destroyer, the specific characteristics are based on the Ships' Covers and may be considered accurate.
47. Appendix I (1 August 1918) to *Battle Cruiser Force Signal Orders*, PRO ADM 137/2135.
48. Fred T. Jane, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1924* (Arco Publishing Company (reprint)), pp.93-94.
49. R. D. Layman *Naval Aviation in the First World War* (Naval Institute Press, 1996), p.124.
50. M Branch Serial No. 84, 25 August 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
51. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
52. *Naval Aviation in the First World War*, p.124.
53. Letter 19 July 1920 from the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, a copy to Captain Hose, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Letter from Hose to the Secretary of the Admiralty 3 August 1920, NAC RG24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5632, file 31-9-1.
56. Telegram 24 September 1920, NAC RG24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5632, file 31-9-1.
57. Memorandum circa 28 July from DDR, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
58. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
59. Captain Hose to the Admiralty, 18 August 1920, NAC RG24 volume 5632, file N.S.S. 31-9-1 vol 1.
60. Letter from Captain H. G. H. Adams to the Admiralty, 21 October 1920, PRO ADM 1/8587/80.
61. Letter from the Secretary of the Admiralty to Captain Hose, 9 September 1920, NAC RG24, Series D-1-a, Volume 5632, File 31-9-9.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
65. Letter from Hose to the Admiralty, 2 August 1920, NAC RG24, Series D-1-a, Volume 5632, File 31-9-9. Further research is required to determine just what the official stance was on the seamen getting their tot from 1910 through 1920.
66. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. Letter from Hose to Captain Adams of HMCS *Aurora*, 23 December 1920 (DHH: *Aurora* "8000" File.
69. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
70. Memoranda to the Director of the Naval Service from T. C. Phillips, Consulting Naval Engineer, 10 January 1921 (NAC: RG24, volume 5632, File N.S.S. 31-1-1.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Letter from Captain Adams to the Secretary, Department of the Naval Service, 25 October 1920, DHH *Aurora* "8000" File.
73. Letter from Buckingham Palace to the Assistant Director of the Naval Service, 16 August 1921, DHH "Insignia, Flags and Customs" File, folder 81/520/1460-3.
74. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
75. *Ship Summary of Full Calibre Gunnery Practices*, 24 November 1921, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11GE, volume 1.
76. Naval Staff, Admiralty CB 902 *Progress in Naval Gunnery, 1914 to 1918*, July 1919, p.52, PRO ADM 186/238.
77. *Annual Report of Gunnery Exercises and Practices and Statement of Expenditure of Ammunition on Board HMCS Aurora*, Remarks of C-in-C or Senior Officer (Captain Adams), NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11GE, volume 1.
78. Letter from Rear-Admiral A. F. Everett to the Commander-in-Chief, North American and West Indies Station, 16 February 1921, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11GE, volume 1.
79. Letter from Rear-Admiral A. F. Everett to the Commanding Officers of *Aurora*, *Patrician* and *Patriot* 15 February 1921, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11GE, volume 1.
80. Letter from Commander-in-Chief, North America and West Indies Station, to the Director of the Naval Service of Canada, "Remarks on Gunnery Practices of HMCS 'Aurora' 17th, 21st, 22nd March 1922", NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11GE, volume 1.
81. *Brief History of HMCS Aurora.*
82. Letter from G. J. Desbarats, to Mr E. Macnab, 27 November 1930, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5694, File 842-2-8.
83. Letter from the Chief Accountant for the Deputy Minister to the Secretary of the High Commission in London, 20 December 1927, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5694, File 842-2-8.
84. Minute of a Meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council [for Canada] 9 March 1927, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5694, File 842-2-8.
85. Letter from the Bank of Montreal to the Deputy Minister 4 April 1929, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-a, Volume 5694, File 842-2-10.
86. *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1906-1921*, p.55.
87. *British Destroyers*, p.221.
88. Captain H. G. Adams to the Secretary, Department of the Naval Service, 12 October 1921, NAC RG24, volume 5632, File N.S.S. 31-1-1-14.
89. Letter from the Director of Naval Stores to the Naval Armament Supply Officer Halifax 25 May 1923, NAC RG 24 Series D-1-b, Volume 4008, File 1057-50-11, volume 1.

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