

Thirteenth Day.
8 May 1907.

COASTWISE
TRADE.

(Sir
Joseph Ward.)

waters. We decided to go for uniformity in legislation as far as possible, to meet the different requirements of the Empire. The cause of this being referred here, was a desire on our part to try and control ships and shipping in the islands of the Pacific, making those islands part and parcel of the territories of Australia and New Zealand, and we wanted to arrive at a decision upon it, and found we could not govern the trade on the oceans outside our own territory, and we decided that aspect of it should be transferred to this Conference.

Mr. DEAKIN : Does not that involve a consideration of this resolution of 1902 which we have already set down for consideration by this Conference ? That is to say, is not the main point so far as we are concerned, or rather, is not our main object to learn the opinion of the Government of the United Kingdom as to the possibility of dealing with the trade between the Mother Country and its Colonies and Possessions as coastwise trade. The islands of the Pacific have a particular interest for New Zealand and the Commonwealth; but, of course, they would come under any application of these general principles to which by resolution attention was called in 1902. I presume the question has been considered since, and was just about to briefly point out the steps by which the Government of the United Kingdom came to agree to this resolution in 1902. The then President of the Board of Trade, at page 134, pointed out that if there was to be a reciprocity arrangement in regard to coastwise trade only three countries would be affected — Russia, the United States, and France — because every other country did practically leave its coastal trade open to British vessels. Russia and the United States are exceptions, and France is a partial exception. Again he said the question might be raised to Russia whether the trade between Great Britain and her Colonies was not in her sense of the term coastal trade, on the plea that she has made traffic between Odessa on the Black Sea and Port Arthur coastal trade. Those were two ports in the same territory, whereas the United States made Honolulu, Hawaii, and Porto Rico all islands in the ocean subject to their coastal trade provisions. Sir Wilfrid Laurier then pointed out that all the resolution did was to call attention to this subject. The resolution was approved. At page 139 it will be found as it appears on the agenda paper for this Conference. There will be found as Appendix No. 18 at page 453—a memorandum by the Board of Trade—which sets out the practice of the different countries there mentioned in regard to their coastwise commerce. I will only call attention to the general principle adopted by Portugal, which first reserved the whole of its trade absolutely as coastwise trade, and then opened its ports to foreign vessels as appeared advisable or in consideration for reciprocal concessions. They started with reserving the whole of the coastal trade, and then commenced to throw open to everybody certain portions of it which they did not wish to reserve, and to make reciprocal arrangements with countries that did reserve their coastwise trade. That seems to be a course which has something to be said in its favour. At page 456, paragraph 20, of this report, there is a statement in Annex No. 8, showing the position of coastal trade, which says : “ It will be seen that there is no treaty under which the right to share in the “ coasting trade of all our Colonies and Possessions is granted to any foreign “ country, but a few treaties (mostly with unimportant countries from a “ maritime point of view) concede this right with respect to our Crown “ Colonies and certain self-governing Colonies which have adhered to those “ treaties.” It mentions Greece, Paraguay, and the Argentine. The Board of Trade Memorandum raises the question as to whether there is a distinction between what might be called a foreign shipping trade and coasting trade proper, and then proceeds : “ Assuming that any difficulty of this kind is “ surmounted, the treaty position as regards inter-Empire trade would appear