

Thirteenth Day.
8 May 1907.

COASTWISE
TRADE.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : No, not quite.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : It is desirable that the attention of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Colonies should be called to the present state and to the advisability of refusing—

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : No, really, it would be very misleading. I am sure you will take it that, on the whole, we are the best judges of what the effect would be upon people here, how they would read it to-morrow morning, and would say : “ They are going to consider the question of reserving the coasting trades to themselves.” We know the danger of that from the American point of view, where the balance of advantage is so enormously in our favour at present. The same thing with regard to Russia. But I do not mind you saying that you are going to look into the question of the way America is treating New Zealand or Australian shipping, because there you have a distinct grievance, and I think you ought to look into it. If I may say so, and I think the Chairman agrees, it could only be dealt with by Imperial legislation. Therefore it is for you to look into it.

Sir JAMES MACKAY : The same applies to the trade from Japan across to San Francisco, which is carried on by British ships. They are not allowed to take a passenger from Honolulu to San Francisco, or a ton of cargo—that is the case with the White Star Line, and other vessels.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : We cannot hit the Americans in our trade. They are not in our coasting trade at all.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : If you brought down a proposition to-morrow (which would be a little startling, I admit) to say that the trade between Ireland and England was coastwise trade, and that no American ship could take a passenger or a ton of cargo to or from Ireland either going or coming, you would be putting American ships in the same position as New Zealand and Australian ships are in now with regard to trading between them and America viâ Honolulu or any of the Hawaiian Islands.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : It would be incredible that we should commit the folly of doing so. We are practically carrying more than half the whole international trade of the United States of America. For us to do a thing of that sort would simply mean reprisals. I do not know how long it would take to carry a Bill through the House of Representatives and the Senate—I do not think so long as here, even under the guillotine—but there would be a Bill through in three weeks, a subsidies Bill, and we should have the trades of the Atlantic contested in competition which would be just as formidable as the American competition we had to meet in the fifties.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I say at once it would be a very improper thing to do, I should be very sorry to see it done; but that is exactly what goes on so far as we are concerned in regard to Honolulu.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I think Sir Joseph Ward, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and Mr. Deakin have made a great case about that, but seeing that all the object you have in view is met by confining the resolution to an inquiry as to the trade between one British Colony and another, I think it would be misleading for us to subscribe to a resolution which looks really as if we were in favour of the principle of refusing the privileges of the coasting trade to foreign ships.