

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Yes, and increasing it to 18 knots would make an enormous difference.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : If you are going to pay 250,000*l.* a year, and if the other countries coming in pay another 100,000*l.* a year, in my opinion it would be worth it.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I agree, if it is only that.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : To bring the countries together as a matter of business you want to carry out a feasible scheme. If these steamers running out to Australia should run out to Vancouver and back again on a 15-knot service I would not give twopence towards it; I would just as soon travel by our direct cargo steamers, if I were going home as a matter of speed. From a New Zealand standpoint, I would not be prepared to put down any money for a slow service. These powerful self-governing countries are prepared to do something and we want Britain to join, which would enable us to come within three weeks of London. For my part, I should be exceedingly glad to see the proposal made in the direction Sir Wilfrid Laurier is urging, but with an effort to greater speed to both between England and Canada, and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. I know the obligations upon Australia for other services are greater than ours, and make them necessarily consider whether they can afford to give large sums of money to another service running at a high speed. One can thoroughly understand that as being a reasonable view to take, but the advantages all round to them would be very great, and it is at all events worthy of consideration. You cannot tell what the steamship competitors would be prepared to do. If we were to pass at this Conference a resolution inviting offers, say, for a service to run from England to Canada, to Quebec or Halifax, whichever alternative you like, in summer or winter, and make it a condition that the speed was to be 23 knots an hour, and ask tenders for it, and do the same thing on the Pacific side, I should go straight for a 21-knot service there, and find out what amount of subsidy was required for it. I have got sufficient knowledge of the whole proposition to realise that you cannot get a fast service like this even with the coaling depôts available at short distances, unless you are prepared to pay a large subsidy for it. What is a few hundred thousand a year to Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in order to get something of the kind when you consider the advantages to be obtained?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE : What additional amount do you think a 20-knot service means?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I should think 300,000*l.* a year, by comparison with anything you have done for Australia now, including the Canadian side.

Mr. DEAKIN : You can easily test this question by inviting offers for services at 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 knots.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : This matter of a route across to Vancouver we have been urging on for many years. I have been at it for 17 or 18 years personally. Every opportunity I have had I have been talking about improving the service across to Vancouver. I took the trouble 12 years ago to go straight from London to Canada for the purpose of interviewing the Canadian Government to get a contract signed. I got it signed and took it back to New Zealand, but where we are going to be landed, as far as New Zealand is concerned, in the absence of united action is that the

Fifteenth Day.
14 May 1907.

MAIL SERVICE
TO AUSTRALIA
AND NEW
ZEALAND *via*
CANADA.