

Fifteenth Day.
14 May 1907.

MAIL SERVICE
TO AUSTRALIA
AND NEW
ZEALAND via
CANADA.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : How would this satisfy you : "Of a speed as nearly equal to the Atlantic ships" ?

Sir WILLIAM LYNE : Yes, leaving out character altogether.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Yes, I will take out the word "character." I have no objection.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE : There is a steamer of 6,000 tons running across now, but not at that full speed.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes. One more word about this. I should be sorry to support the idea of mixing this up with what experts may think is the best course to follow, because I look upon that simply (although Mr. Lloyd George does not intend it) as having the effect of delaying this before we arrive at any conclusion at all for a considerable period. I think it is infinitely better if we make up our minds to test what is possible here on the suggestion put forth by Sir Wilfrid Laurier—make up our minds what the speed is that we are prepared to have between England and Canada and between Canada and Australia and New Zealand, and then call for tenders for it. Let us fix it as a matter of policy and give it out definitely that we are going to support a service of that kind.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I have said something about experts in my observations, but that is not by proposal. My proposal is really described in the words used by Mr. Deakin in his resolution last week. I used the words "concerted inquiry," and he put "systematic." I do not think it matters. We really cannot pledge ourselves now as to the best means of doing this thing. The resolution has not even been placed on the paper. I do not think it really fair. If it be regarded as a matter of immense practical moment—and I think it is—I think it would have been fair to the Imperial Government, at any rate, to let us have a copy of the resolution. We have had copies of all the resolutions about fiscal reform, but never a copy of this one practical proposal, which we could have examined. It ought to come before the Cabinet. But we saw this resolution for the first time this morning, and it is really rushing us unfairly, I must say, to ask us to pledge ourselves, not to the general proposition, that it is desirable or that we will look into the matter, but to pledge ourselves to the actual route, to a 20-knot service here, a 24-knot service there, and an 18-knot service in another place. Surely that is a thing that ought to be inquired into. The difference in cost between an 18 and a 20-knot service I am told is simply prodigious. The figures given to me were almost prohibitive. Possibly, when we look into it, it may simply have been that a shipowner was trying to frighten us off it; I cannot say, but the figures were very alarming. To ask us to pledge ourselves to the very smallest detail (because that is what this means) without the slightest further talk amongst ourselves as to the best plan of doing this thing, I really do not think it quite fair to us.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : The concrete resolution has been placed before you, but the idea has been running in this Conference all through of such an import service as we have been asking for.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I agree.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : The idea has not only been agitated, but talked about and conferred upon informally for about some three weeks. The