

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

motion. Mr. Hill's is hardly an amendment, and I am not sure that we could not discuss them together. I think Sir Joseph Ward might incorporate Mr. Norman Hill's motion with his.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I have no objection to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would enable us to discuss the whole thing.

MR. NORMAN HILL: I think Sir Joseph Ward rather follows the recognition of the general principle.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it would be more desirable if they could be discussed as one proposition.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I move the following motion:—

"That it should be a suggestion to the Board of Trade that they should provide for the issue of a survey-certificate in the case of non-passenger vessels, and that standards as to hull, machinery, boilers, and life-saving appliances, established by the Board of Trade and testified by current certificates, should be accepted for British ships throughout the Empire."

I move that because I think a great deal of the trouble that arises between the Colonial Government and the shipowners would be, if not entirely removed, greatly minimised if the Board of Trade were asked to provide for the issue of a survey-certificate in the case of non-passenger vessels. The shipowner may still wish to have a certificate of Lloyd's instead of obtaining a certificate for the second-class steamers from the Board of Trade, but he would then impose upon himself voluntarily the disabilities that arise in the Colonies from the local Marine Department. I understand on a former occasion that some difficulties presented themselves to shipowners on account of the number of cargo steamers that might require to have a Board of Trade certificate issued under this proposal; but that is a matter for the shipowners. Speaking for New Zealand, we would unreservedly accept the Board of Trade certificate. We do it with the knowledge that it requires a review by the Officers of the Board of Trade, but we still reserve under our laws the right to have examination of ships under certain conditions. If we believe a ship to be unseaworthy, the local authorities should be able to step in.

THE CHAIRMAN: We always reserve that right.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: With regard to the second portion, on the whole I am inclined to support that. If the Board of Trade issue a certificate providing for the standard of hulls, machinery, boilers, and life-saving appliances, then I think to a very large extent some of those cases, where an owner in distant countries sails very close to the wind, would be met by the conditions imposed in the first instance. In our country we would look upon that as being satisfactory for the preservation of life. I do not want to take up the time of the Conference; the resolutions explain themselves thoroughly, and I have pleasure in moving them.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Does Sir Joseph move the resolution as a whole.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. We should like to hear the views first of all of the Australian delegates.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I have not the clause before me, but I have had a comparison made of the different provisions in reference to surveys. The New Zealand Act provides that every steamship shall be surveyed once in each year, and they reserve their right to do that. I did not quite understand whether Sir Joseph Ward's motion is to give that up.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: No, certainly not.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: You said you were prepared to abide by the certificate of the Board of Trade. If you abide by the certificate of the Board of Trade you must to a certain extent give that up. There is no objection so far as I can see to the proposal, provided there is a reserve power on behalf of New Zealand or the Commonwealth. If occasion arises in the mind of those who have to deal with the matter, they should have the right to make a resurvey. The Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 says "every passenger ship," and I would like to say, Sir Joseph, that I agree with some remarks you made the other day that the Board of Trade, if

coming within close distance of their survey, should give a certificate for other ships as well as passenger ships. The Merchant Shipping Act says that every passenger ship which carries more than 12 passengers should be surveyed in each year. Now we are proposing to provide in the Australian Navigation Bill that every steamship more than five years' old shall be surveyed at least once in every six months, and every other steamship once in every 12 months. That is the present proposal of the Australian Government, so that is more drastic than the proposal of New Zealand. I want also to draw attention to this fact, that this Conference, though it is a Conference between the Imperial representatives of the New Zealand and Australian Commonwealths, is practically brought about by the Commonwealth in connection with their latest proposed legislation and the report of the Royal Commission, and, therefore, I do not think the Commonwealth proposal can be set on one side. I feel convinced that the majority of those proposals will be agreed to not only by myself, but by my colleagues. There may be some difference of opinion—I don't think there will be between Mr. Hughes and myself—but there may be with Mr. Thomson, because I know his views from the Minority Report. It seems to me with regard to those three Acts, giving those three different provisions, we must be exceedingly cautious that we in the Commonwealth of Australia—

THE CHAIRMAN: Does that permission extend beyond vessels engaged in the coasting trade?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: No; it extends to our interpretation of the vessels dealing in the coasting trade.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Are you sure of that?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is our intention and our interpretation of the coasting trade. First of all there are the licensed vessels, next there are the vessels that come from over sea, and it is a very strong point with us in Australia that if they do our coasting trade they shall trade exactly under the same conditions as our own vessels. That is as clearly defined in the minds of Australian people as it is possible to be. The report is silent, but still I know what the intention of Parliament is and of the Government, and what our proposals are. Parliament has expressed itself more than once in various other ways on this point.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Oh, no; limit your remarks.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I must say I do not limit my remarks as to the intention of Australian people to bring the over-sea vessels into absolute union with the coastal trade. I like to say exactly what I think and exactly what I mean, and that is what, so far as I am concerned, I am willing to advocate at this Conference.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will there be a condition of this sort? Here is the New Zealand Bill. Section 185, Sub-section 4, says, "A steamship trading to or from any place beyond inter-Colonial limits, and which is not required by the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act to be surveyed and obtain a certificate, need not be surveyed under this Act."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: It can be; I think I may say very likely the Government will agree to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Nobody would ever dream of attempting to deny the Colonies the right.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is a point in my mind; we are not going to give up the right we have. Probably it may be very seldom exercised, but we have to protect our own coast line in that regard, and our own passengers who are coming and going in foreign-going ships.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you have any reason to suspect that a vessel is unseaworthy, it matters not whether it has a Board of Trade certificate or not.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I am not quite clear now how far this survey is intended to go. I feel it was intended, and probably is intended with us now, that that survey shall extend—if you call it a survey—to the inside accommodation as well as to the boiler and frame of the ship; but what I am saying now I apply only to the survey, as described by Mr. Hill the other day, of the boiler and the seaworthiness of the ship.