

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

British vessels that do trade on the coast, practically. Now, we shall insist upon every Colonial shipowner bringing his ship right bang up to date. We shall accept no excuses at all. We shall demand that he shall make such accommodation as is essential to bring his ship up to date, and we shall only exempt him so far as space is concerned where structural arrangements are unreasonable. Now you are asking that you shall be placed in a better position than our Australian shipowners.

MR. COX: I do not see that. The difference between Mr. Norman Hill's motion and the other motion is simply that one puts the proposition affirmatively and the other negatively.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Another point that strikes my mind is this, from a practical standpoint. Our law is passed, and unless some provision such as this is made, which I think is just as strong as the reverse (that is, Mr. Norman Hill's), they have all got to haul themselves up right away, and to put themselves in alteration. In the other case, the Government will make arrangements, I have no doubt, to compel them to do it as soon as they reasonably can.

THE CHAIRMAN: They will screw them up one by one.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That will be the practical way of its being done, but if the Act is passed on the basis of every one having to be up to date as soon as it is passed, I do not see how it is going to be carried out.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I would say this—I would give my vote to the House to give the British shipowner fair time to bring his ship up to date; say 12, 18, or 24 months. I would do anything reasonable in that way to give them time to bring their ships up to date. You cannot expect a shipowner to bring his ship up to the requirements of the Act immediately because the Act comes into force; you must give him time.

MR. FERNIE: How long would you propose to give from the time your Act comes into force? Within what date of your Act coming into force would you apply it to these vessels?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: You are given the outside limit in your Act for certificated cooks, and that comes into force about 18 months after your Act comes into effect. For the rest, the provisions of the Act come into force—nearly all of them—next June. Now, do you say that 12 months is a fair time?

MR. FERNIE: I think you might get some steamers which would be on time charter, which would go away afterwards, and would not wait to comply with the Act.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: If 12 months' time is a fair thing, I feel sure that shipowners could make out a case. Exemption in certain other cases might be provided for, too.

MR. NORMAN HILL: I think we feel very strongly that the old ships should be judged on their merits, and not by this new standard.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: With reference to the point of trying to prevent any idea or intention of having retrospective legislation, that is a very awkward point you bring in, and that is why you do not want, as you said just now, to have these words transposed.

MR. NORMAN HILL: We do not want them brought all under the standard; we want them to be left to be judged separately, as to whether they are sanitary or not.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are not committed, Sir William Lyne, by this resolution, to repudiating retrospective legislation.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I would not vote for it if I were. If I were the Minister dealing with this case when the law came into operation I would take very good care that they brought their ships up as far as they reasonably could. But I do not want to try and do an impossibility.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I say this resolution of mine as it is now, with a rider which Mr. Hill can move if he likes, that such time ought to be permitted after the

passing of the Act—reasonable time to enable shipowners to bring up their ships to the requirements—would meet the case.

MR. NORMAN HILL: I am quite content to put in an exemption to apply to vessels built prior to the enactment of such conditions, having not less than 72 cubic feet, if that will meet Mr. Hughes's case.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I do not object, subject to my proviso.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Vessels built before, but having in fact 72 cubic feet of space for each of the crew. That is No. 1. No. 2 is that it must have a minimum of 72 feet, and if the vessel comes within those conditions, then it is to be judged on its merits as to accommodation—leaving out ventilation and conveniences—and if the sanitary effect is not according to the views of your authority, let them order an increase.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I say, as far as an insanitary ship is concerned, there ought to be no exemption at all.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: How would this do in order to meet the position, "The limit of accommodation devoted to officers and crew prescribed by Colonial laws should apply to existing vessels, except in cases where the Minister is satisfied that, having regard to such limit, the accommodation actually provided is in fact insanitary, but may require the owners to amend the same so as to bring it into a sanitary and healthful condition to the satisfaction of the Minister."

MR. NORMAN HILL: I rather think you have a negative too many.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I will read it again:—"That the limit of accommodation devoted to officers and crew prescribed by Colonial laws should apply to existing vessels, except in cases where the Minister is satisfied that, having regard to such limit, the accommodation actually provided is in fact insanitary, but may require the owner to amend the same so as to bring it into a sanitary and healthful condition to the satisfaction of the Minister."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That exempts all ships excepting those ships where the conditions are insanitary. I say the result would be that no shipowner will attempt to make any structural alterations at all.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: But the local authority—the Minister—can do it in that case.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Not at all. Your motion takes all out except those that are insanitary.

MR. FERNIE: The Minister can say that it is insanitary.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: It applies to accommodation.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: The motion is drawn with a great number of variations.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: It would be a good thing to have lunch now. We have got into a bit of a knot, and we could have it out afterwards.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we do any more business before we adjourn?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: There is one question, and that is this: As this resolution now stands it leaves out all other conditions but the sanitary condition.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: No, not "but the sanitary condition"; it is the other way about.

THE CHAIRMAN: It leaves everything except the cubic quantities and the superficial areas, and I think, if I may say so, that is a very big concession from the shipowners, having regard to their previous point of view.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: To be quite clear, if this resolution is carried, the moment it is to come into operation all these things, whether a new ship or old ship, come into force on that ship.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Do you not think that is a great step to get?