

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I do not know whether they want full details.

MR. COX: The only thing is that the next day the information you sent out might be cabled back here.

MR. NORMAN HILL: They will not waste their money over shipping questions here.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Last night the cable manager made that suggestion to me, and I raised just that very point—that the information would be cabled back again. He said, "No, it would not be cabled back unless any private individual did it."

MR. COX: I should imagine that Reuter's agents would telegraph it here, or some of it.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: It is very important that information should go out—reliable information. We have to remember, of course, that the opponents of some of the proposals submitted here are anxious to get information too, so it requires to be done impartially and with care.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: If anything on the lines of your suggestion could be done, it would be a good thing.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I may say that with the concurrence of the Conference we will see whether we can formulate something that would suit Australia and New Zealand. If so, that would solve the difficulty.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: It is understood that nothing shall be done until your suggestion is brought before the Conference.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Absolutely.

THE CHAIRMAN: We may take it that the result of this conversation is that the text of the resolutions, except such as are held over by the wish of the Conference, should go to the Press here, and that the Australian and New Zealand delegations will try to consider something that will suit their purpose—but that, I suppose, would not go out until our next meeting. I should have liked the President of the Board of Trade to have seen it first.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Perhaps we had better hold it over until he can come.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Certainly. Is this the time, sir, to give notice of any motion?

THE CHAIRMAN: If you please.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I beg to give notice of a motion:—"That the law of any British possession, which operates in regard to vessels registered, or usually trading, in that possession, shall also operate in regard to all vessels coming into a final port of destination in that possession, or clearing outwards from any port therein." I think that will tack on to another resolution. There were two resolutions carried while I was absent; those are not complete, as I understand, and there is a subsequent resolution to be carried before they become part and parcel of the Conference business.

THE CHAIRMAN: That will come under No. 4—the classes of voyages to which Australian conditions should be applicable.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Yes. Another resolution I wish to give notice of is this:—"That no seaman should be permitted to engage as A.B. on board any British ship who cannot show that he is justly entitled to that rating." I know that my friends will agree to that.

MR. COX: Would you mind reading the first one again?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: "That the law of any British possession, which operates in regard to vessels registered, or usually trading, in that possession, shall also operate in regard to all vessels coming into a final port of destination in that possession, or clearing outwards from any port therein."

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Might I point out that these matters that you propose are dealt with in the Report of the Royal Commission.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we had better not discuss them except as they appear under the various items of

the Agenda. Sir William Lyne's first proposition will come clearly under No. 4—"classes of voyages to which Australian conditions should be applicable." The words "Australian conditions" being put in inverted commas means—

HON. W. M. HUGHES: The point Mr. Thomson is making is this: these resolutions are already here in this Report, and there is no earthly use—so it appears to me—in giving notices of motion which are already, or should be, before us. The Report has been submitted, and is an Imperial paper for more than six months. We all are familiar with it, and there is no use in giving these notices, because to give notice of some of them would seem to indicate that we are only to deal with those and not with the others.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is out of order.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: If that is the case, what is the use of giving notice when they are all here.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am simply concerned with the question of order.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: With all deference, I do not think it is in order to give notice of motion of anything already before a committee. It is not so in the Houses of Parliament.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: My third notice of motion is:—"That no person should be employed as an officer on board any British ship, who is not (a) a British subject, and (b) thoroughly conversant with the English language."

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: This Conference has been called—in fact, the origination of it was the existence of this Royal Commission. It was intimated that the recommendations of the Royal Commission would receive consideration at this Conference. I think we would have saved time if we had gone through these recommendations and their application; but if we are going to abandon the Royal Commission's Report entirely, then we are taking a course which I did not anticipate, and which I do not think desirable; and if, on the other hand, we are going to duplicate it by notices of motion, then I think it is undesirable, and that it would be better to go through the Report first, when these notices of motion, many of them, would be quite unnecessary. The proposals of the Royal Commission, in addition to recommending certain provisions, limit the application of these provisions, and there might be no difficulty with a great many of them owing to that limitation; but if we are going to duplicate these recommendations—

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it that when we get to section 4 it will be open to anybody in the Conference to propose anything as to the classes of voyages to which Australian conditions should be applicable. Sir William Lyne has given notice of one proposition; we can have amendments and alter them, but as to whether that is the best mode of discussing it, is a matter I am not concerned with.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I think, with all deference, that that is a thing you should be concerned with, because if you are not here to prescribe some sort of order, anyone may bring forward any sort of motion whatever, and, provided it can be said in any way to be relevant, we can discuss it. This motion is already before us. The reason we have been called together is because of this Commission making certain recommendations, and now we are here to discuss these recommendations. Sir William Lyne now brings forward motions already before us, and others, which he does not bring forward, and which have to be discussed, are also in our report and so are before us. If he duplicated them all, it would be obvious what he was doing.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be inconvenient.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: But when he duplicates some—

SIR JOSEPH WARD: You can get over that by giving notice in lieu of Sir William Lyne's motion.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: No doubt we can get over that very easily.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I do not see how you can stop it.