

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you give notice of that, or will you move it now?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I will move it now, or give notice of it and move it on Monday, whichever you like.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I am very much afraid—

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Then that confirms the right we have to legislate in our own waters, and we cannot go beyond our own waters.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: We are not appealing to this Conference, surely, to get authority for what we shall do as regards a manning scale. Your approval or non-approval of a manning scale is not necessary to us, when we have already got power to create a manning scale for vessels registered in Australia or trading on the coast.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Not beyond our own waters.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: No.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: We have done that.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I do not want to go beyond that.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That is where I differ. I want to know whether this Conference is here to merely try and settle Australian affairs, or whether it is a kind of embryo Imperial Council.

MR. COX: Certainly not.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Is the Imperial Council then a Council in which the Australian and New Zealand members merely sit down and listen.

THE CHAIRMAN: You were going to put that off until later, Mr. Hughes.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I want to say that upon that motion yesterday I intended to have moved this. I read it at the time, but deferred it on account of the absence of Sir William Lyne. This is a motion I wrote out yesterday in connection with this very matter. We wanted a definition of coastal trade, and my definition was this: "Coastal trade shall comprise—"

HON. W. M. HUGHES: We have not got to that yet. We shall come to that presently. It is under "4."

SIR JOSEPH WARD: No, it was connected with a motion we carried yesterday. It arose from a discussion as to what was the definition of the term "coast-wise."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: No doubt, but it would be better to discuss that in the proper place under Section 4. We have got to deal with wages next, and one or two incidental matters.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I was only going to say that it arose upon the definition of "coast-wise," and that it was part and parcel of it. The point is this: I recognise—and I presume you do, too,—that we are concerned in legislation as affecting Australia and New Zealand with regard to this matter of manning, and we have affirmed we have a right to do it. We have got to settle what the term "coast-wise" covers. I do not see myself that we are going to gain anything by saying to the British representatives, "What are you going to do in 'the matter of manning ships trading from your country' to ours?" They cannot do that because they have to trade to the East, to the Mediterranean, and all over the world, and what applies to us is local to us, and would have a fixed application to us; but it would not necessarily apply to other parts of the world.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: We differ fundamentally in opinion about that, and therefore there is no good in talking about it.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Suppose we pass a resolution then; we cannot do any good.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I have moved a resolution with regard to manning. I shall be very glad to deal with it now, or to withdraw it for the present,—which ever is preferred.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: The President announced when he opened the Conference, that this was not an Imperial Conference, and could not be an Imperial

Conference, as some of the self-governing portions of the Empire were not represented. Consequently we are not dealing with a law for the Empire; we are representatives of Australia and New Zealand dealing with these matters, where our two jurisdictions may be considered to touch, or where our interests are intermixed; and this Conference having agreed to Australia and New Zealand legislating as they see fit as to coastal trade—it has to be settled what coastal trade is—and as to vessels registered in Australia, then I think we have fulfilled all we have to do in that connection.

MR. COX: May I add to that that that was precisely the reason why we did not invite Canada, and why we deprecated the attendance of that and other responsible government colonies, because it was considered that this was a practical question between Australia, New Zealand, and ourselves, and we wanted to discuss it, as it concerned us three, and not to discuss the question as it concerned the whole Empire, because that would be a very big question. It is open to the Prime Minister of Canada, of Australia, or of any other Colony, to open the matter at the Imperial Conference, and it is a very, very wide question indeed.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: What I understand here is that clause 7, of Letter No. 21, (Mr. Lyttelton to His Excellency Lord Northcote) says, "The practical inconveniences which may arise from divergent or opposed legislation in different parts of the Empire are indicated in Messrs. Weightman & Pedder's report on the "Commonwealth Bill."

MR. COX: In the case of Canada, in the case of the Cape, and in the case of Natal, no such divergence has arisen. In the case of Australia and New Zealand it has arisen, and therefore we wanted to discuss, as practical men, those cases where divergences had arisen, leaving the larger question to be discussed elsewhere.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: The Imperial Government subsequently to this introduced fresh legislation, and on the lines (although not proceeding so far) recommended by our Commission—that is to say you have got your rating for seamen, you have got your increased accommodation for seamen, you have got your certificated cooks, your food scale, and so on.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: We should not object to that.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: No, we rejoice in it.

THE CHAIRMAN: We had better leave that until Monday.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Very well, I will leave that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would rather you did.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: The proposal in our Government Bill is: "All ships registered in Australia, and all other ships (British or foreign) when carrying passengers or cargo shipped or taken on board in any port in Australia to be carried to and landed or delivered at any other port therein or in New Zealand, shall carry as crew the number and description of persons specified in the scale set out in Schedule II., or as prescribed." That is the main point.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Are we on the matter now?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is what we were on.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I thought that would come on the coastal trade.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: "Provided that the Minister may exempt any ships from the operation of this section in regard to boys or apprentices." That is what we have provided so far in the Bill, and the schedule is given here,—Schedule II.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Might I ask you whether this Bill is to be constantly referred to in the Conference, and whether, in that case, there would be any objection to members having a copy of it?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We have not got copies enough, I am afraid.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: If it is being constantly referred to it would be advisable, otherwise it does not matter.