

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

which is carried by the oversea steamers is a traffic largely created by those steamers. In many cases it consists of people who are accompanying friends and relatives so far on their sea journey, and in many other cases, except where there is no alternative by rail, I think if you had not got the large passenger oversea steamers, the people might prefer the rail. That is my point, that to a large extent it is created by the steamers.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: It is not the P. & O.; it is the total.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I might add to the figures given by Sir William Lyne those regarding passengers between Western Australia and the Eastern States—they are Sir William's own departmental figures. The coastal boats have carried during the last six years three-quarters of the passengers that have passed between West Australia and the Eastern States; out of 264,000 they have carried 190,000.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I have given you the whole; that is only part.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: May I read to you what I conceive to be the substance of what we have come to, and see whether we can pass a resolution before lunch: "That the vessels to which the conditions imposed by the law of Australia or New Zealand are applicable should be (a) vessels registered in the Colony while trading therein, and (b) vessels, wherever registered, while trading on the coast of the Colony. That for the purpose of this resolution a vessel shall be deemed to trade if she takes on board cargo or passengers at any port in the Colony to be carried to and landed or delivered at any other port in the Colony."

MR. MILLS: That declares that the Colonial laws will apply to a Colonial ship wherever she is. You say "vessels registered in the Colony or vessels otherwise registered trading within the Colony."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: "Whilst trading"; that was in my resolution.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: Yes, whilst registered.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH then put the resolution to the meeting, and it was unanimously agreed to.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: May we also understand that this exempts people with their tickets and their cargo? (Agreed.)

HON. W. M. HUGHES: So far as through tickets are concerned, I shall be favourable; so far as merchandise is concerned, we ought to set forth some explanatory clause to say exactly what we mean, otherwise it can be readily understood that that bald subsection might leave a very wide loophole. I will consider that during lunch.

(The Conference adjourned for lunch.)

At the resumption after lunch,

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE took the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have to apologise for my absence during the last two days; but I hear you have got on uncommonly well in my absence. Where are we now?

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: Mr. President, when we were adjourning for luncheon, there was before us a question on which I do not think there was any division of opinion. It was simply as to how we should express the fact that a vessel should not be deemed to engage in the coasting trade merely because it carried between two Colonial ports passengers holding through tickets to or from some oversea place (people who had broken their journeys), and one little point was reserved because Mr. Hughes was not quite satisfied as to whether it was all right. I have had a little conference with him, and it has now been agreed to put in the word "oversea," so that it shall read, "An oversea vessel shall not be deemed to engage in the coasting trade merely because it carries between two Australian or New Zealand ports," and so on. I think that meets his point; otherwise, I think there was a unanimous opinion as to that resolution.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will read it: "An oversea vessel shall not be deemed to engage in the coasting trade

"merely because it carries between two or more Australian or New Zealand ports, (a) passengers holding through tickets to or from some oversea place; (b) merchandise consigned on through bill of lading to or from some oversea place."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: There is a rider in pencil—"when carried by another oversea vessel."

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: Yes; we have put that in more neatly by simply saying, "an oversea vessel shall not be deemed."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: We are drafting something to meet the case of a ship that drops some cargo, say, at Port A, and, subsequently, that cargo is taken on to Port B by some other ship.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: That is covered.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I do not think it does cover it.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: What Mr. Hughes wanted, was that it should be an oversea vessel belonging to the same company.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes; but you have taken my rider off. I quite agree that under some circumstances an oversea vessel ought not to be deemed to be engaged in the coasting trade, but under other circumstances it would be. If this were done habitually, it would be. If we define an "oversea vessel" to mean a vessel that is habitually engaged in travelling from some port of the Commonwealth, or to some port of the Commonwealth from some place beyond the seas—

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: That will do.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: But it might be held to apply to an oversea vessel or a vessel registered in some place beyond the sea.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: Let us make it so—"a vessel ordinarily engaged"—will that do?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: "Ordinarily and usually."

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: "Usually engaged in the oversea trade."

THE CHAIRMAN: "In the oversea trade"—I should think that would do. Now, does that meet your view, Mr. Hughes—"a vessel usually engaged in the oversea trade shall not be deemed to engage in the coasting trade merely because it carries between two Australian or New Zealand ports, (a) passengers holding through tickets to or from some oversea place; (b) merchandise consigned on through bill of lading to or from some oversea place."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes. By that, do I understand that it means merchandise consigned to a final port or destination of the oversea ship alluded to—the second ship?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Well, I think you had better put in that resolution "to or from some ports of the Commonwealth."

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: It might not be the final port of destination of the vessel, but of the goods.

THE CHAIRMAN: "Merchandise consigned on through bill of lading to or from some oversea place."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes; to such port as such merchandise has been or is in fact consigned.

THE CHAIRMAN: "Through bill of lading" are really the words that protect you, Mr. Hughes.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: If they carried it on, it would no longer be a through bill of lading. I think that is all right.

MR. BELCHER: Assuming that the Orient Company, for instance, took cargo to Australia, a portion of which was for New Zealand, and the original cargo, we will say, was discharged at Adelaide or Melbourne, and the Orient Company chose to run a vessel inter-Colonially between New Zealand and Australia, it could not very well be brought under the category of a coastal ship. Supposing they liked to tranship that cargo to another vessel of the sort I have