

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

THE CHAIRMAN: The only suggestion I wired to Mr. Llewellyn Smith was this:—"You must remember that all these reports may be cabled back here, and probably will be, by some of the papers, so that they will appear in the British press." If you do not mind, I would suggest that as we submit our reports to you, so you might submit your reports, before you cable them, to us.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We have not cabled any reports, but we shall be very glad to be able to cable some.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think there is any objection so long as we agree on the report. Otherwise, they might be cabled back here; and you know there has been a correspondence in the press, and we want to avoid any misleading reports.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: The Conference will only last a little while—say two days more—and at the end of that time I presume there will be no objection to furnish the Colonial press with an ample résumé of the whole thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: What has been the practice with regard to Colonial Conferences?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We have generally let the press in.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not the Imperial Conferences. Mr. Chamberlain has ruled out the press very ruthlessly.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: You can do things here which we cannot do on our side.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: As the notices of motion cannot be type-written to-night, I propose to read them:—

"That the Board of Trade be urged to take into immediate consideration the question of eyesight tests with a view to imposing a higher standard of efficiency than at present required."

"That the Imperial and Colonial Governments concerned be requested to introduce legislation to give effect to the resolutions of the Conference in cases where legislation is necessary."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Is there any occasion for that?

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Certainly. I also give notice of motion:—

"That the fact of the Royal Assent having been given to a Shipping Act of the Commonwealth or New Zealand should be conclusive evidence of all purposes and in all Courts that such Act is not *ultra vires* of the Imperial Shipping Acts."

THE CHAIRMAN: That is outside our limits.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I am giving it advisedly, because when we get consent to a Shipping Act we want that consent to be conclusive as to its validity so far as the Imperial Shipping Act is concerned. The examination that takes place at the Colonial Office before the assent is given would, of course, be of such

a character as to satisfy them on the point. If they say "No" as to any clause, they will give their reasons, which can be considered by our Crown Law Officers. If the objection is admitted to be sound, our Parliament would no doubt alter the Act before it came into operation. If not admitted, the point could be settled by reference to, say, the Privy Council on a case stated, and both sides would accept the decision. Then I want to give notice:—

"That in view of the large and steadily increasing volume of trade to and from Australia and New Zealand by way of the Suez Canal, those Dependencies are entitled to direct representation on the Council of Administration of the Canal, and that the Imperial Government be requested to endeavour to obtain this."

THE CHAIRMAN: The poor Imperial Government has been unable to secure representation for itself on the Canal. That was a good bargain, but it was overlooked, that particular point. We are completely swamped by the foreign representatives there.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: If you get one good Australian representative, with New Zealand also having a say, very likely you will do better.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I can tell you this, on that question. I referred to it before you came to-day. Lord Elgin and yourself replied to Mr. Deakin—to a query as to whether you could not get a reduction of the dues, considering the shares were giving 32 per cent. interest; and Lord Elgin stated that he did not think 32 per cent. was too much.

MR. BELCHER: I beg to give notice of motion:—

"That it be a recommendation from this Conference to the Board of Trade, to ascertain and investigate the various clauses attached by ship-owners to the Articles of Agreement signed by the crews of vessels. This with a view of securing uniformity in this respect, and also establishing the principle of equity as between employer and employed."

"That this Conference is opposed to the employment of Lascars, Coolies, Chinamen or persons of any other alien race on any vessels owned, registered or chartered to trade in the Commonwealth or New Zealand."

THE CHAIRMAN: I am glad that we are going to have a nice non-controversial subject of that sort to discuss.

MR. BELCHER: I beg also to give notice of motion:—

"That it be a recommendation from this Conference to the Board of Trade to suggest that legislation be introduced whereby all seamen be paid their full wages at every port where the crew may desire the wages to be paid."

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you say *two* days, Mr. Hughes?

(The Conference adjourned till the following day at 11.30 o'clock.)