

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

New Zealand and Australian points of view we have nothing to complain of. In our law we have provided what the minimum shall be, and Australia will do the same.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We propose to do it.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are on a different basis.

MR. BELCHER: If we could have the principle of a minimum it will apply to officers, seamen, firemen, and everybody else, and I think you have what you want.

MR. PEMBROKE: As an underwriter, I prefer giving a free hand to the Board of Trade.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would be our minimum standard, whatever it is.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Is not the principle which we accept, the principle that we have laid down by the Imperial Parliament, that a vessel is unseaworthy if not efficiently manned?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is it.

MR. NORMAN HILL: That is the only principle. If you lay down rules and instructions which exceed the necessity of seaworthiness, we can challenge them.

THE CHAIRMAN: The minimum standard is that required by seaworthiness.

MR. NORMAN HILL: The test is seaworthiness. The test is not by scale.

THE CHAIRMAN: I agree. That is why I object to the word "scale."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Put in "basis."

THE CHAIRMAN: A fixed number is a different thing, but the standard means the standard of seaworthiness.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: To come really to practically bedrock, suppose we carry the provision which is in this Bill which I have before me now, which mentions $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons as the minimum. If this resolution agreeing to the principle is carried, might I ask this—I do not know whether you can absolutely answer—is that likely to be used as a reason for not agreeing to our Bill?

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: Your Bill only applies to Australian ships.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I want a minimum, so far as our powers go. If we put in a minimum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons, will that be objected to when the Act is passed?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly not. You can impose any conditions you like for your own trade.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I wish to see myself safe in this matter, that is all. I want to be able to say when I am dealing with this Bill, as I shall have to deal with it if I am in the Government at the time, that if this provision is put in, it will not be any obstacle to the reception of the Bill by the Imperial Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Speaking for myself, I should certainly not regard it as an obstacle. The only thing I am contending for is that each Colony and the Imperial Government should fix their own basis, as it were.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I quite agree with you in that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sir Joseph Ward has the New Zealand Bill. They have one basis, you suggest another, and we have set up a third, but we are all agreed that there ought to be some minimum standard of manning. That is the principle upon which we are all agreed.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We are affirming a principle. If this resolution, which is an open one to some extent, is carried, is it likely that your minimum would be adhered to at $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons?

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: We could not say that.

MR. COX: How far are you going to make the Australian conditions apply?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: As far as we can.

THE CHAIRMAN: Captain Chalmers points out a very important consideration—that we shall have to depart from the scale altogether if liquid fuel comes in; and it is coming in very rapidly.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Or improvement in appliances?

THE CHAIRMAN: We can only affirm the principle. There must be certain elasticity to meet new conditions, and the great variety of conditions which have arisen in the construction of vessels.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: It is a well-known fact that in some ships men can shovel 5 tons easier than in other ships they can fire $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons. We had evidence of that before the Commission. In some of our ships they are doing 5 tons, and in others $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons. The position of the bunkers, and their condition, whether they are full or not, the kind of machinery, and so on, whether the ashes are thrown out by an ejector or whether they have to haul them up—everything tells.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Cannot we only affirm the principle that efficient manning is one of the essentials of seaworthiness.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: If we do that, I want it to be clearly understood that that does not interfere with our proposal to make a scale.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, certainly not.

MR. NORMAN HILL: The only thing we do hope is that Sir William will consider the expediency, rather than putting it into a schedule of an Act of Parliament, of adopting the course our Government has adopted, and put it in as instructions to their detaining officers, so that those instructions can be reconsidered and any ship judged on its merits to meet the case which Mr. Hughes has put. If your officers were satisfied that because of the mechanical assistance given to the men they could work more easily 5 tons on ship A than 3 tons on ship B, ship A should get the benefit of having adopted those mechanical contrivances. If instead of putting it into a schedule of an Act of Parliament you adopt our principle and give it as instructions to the detaining officers, you will then be in a position to reconsider them.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I think we should very likely do it by a regulation under the Act in that way.

MR. NORMAN HILL: If you would, it would help.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: We shall have some sort of Committee, or experts.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I think we might adopt your proposal.

THE CHAIRMAN: Allowing each Colony to take its own basis, and alter it from time to time?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: On that understanding—so long as it is clearly understood—I shall not press against it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you mind accepting it in this form, Mr. Hughes? "That this Conference approves of the principle of a minimum standard of manning applicable to all United Kingdom, Australian, and New Zealand ships."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes; I will amend mine to suit that.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Could we have it made clear that that manning means the stokehold as well as the deck?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Oh, it does.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: It is all very well for Mr. Hughes to say it does, but I have had a good deal to say on this question in the Imperial Parliament, and we have never got that far yet, to say it will apply to the stokehold.

CAPTAIN CHALMERS: It does apply to the stokehold.