

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

necessary at the present juncture to pass a recommendation of that kind. I hope we may possibly have another Conference at some future time.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Perhaps you will come to Australia.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that to be taken as an invitation?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Yes, certainly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wherever the Conference is held next time, it may be our duty to make recommendations for the alteration of your law.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: You would get a little clearer light on the subject in Australia.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have no doubt. And therefore I trust that the present Conference, at any rate, seeing that our new legislation has not even come into operation, but will on the 1st June, allow us, first of all, to see how the new provisions work, considering they are enormously in advance of past legislation; and I hope Mr. Belcher will not put us to the necessity of dividing, because the Imperial representatives would have to vote against him.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Would it not be a good thing to have it on record that the Australian and New Zealand delegation had this opinion? It would do no harm.

THE CHAIRMAN: But the Australian and New Zealand representatives have not that opinion; they have not supported Mr. Belcher's recommendation. They have supported a certain proportion of wages.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I think it would be better not to pay all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Belcher's resolution is for full wages—if the Australian and New Zealand representatives would like to vote for a resolution of that kind. At the present moment we must abide by our own Act until we see how it works, and our opinion is that it will work out satisfactorily.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: What in effect does your Act say?

THE CHAIRMAN: It gives him perfect freedom of contract. If he likes to make a contract before he goes on board for the payment of every penny, very well; the law allows it. But we provide, in the absence and in spite of a contract, that he must have the right to allot at least 50 per cent. of his wages to relatives or to savings banks.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: After the expiry of what period?

THE CHAIRMAN: One month. That is to be paid regularly up to 50 per cent. Then when he lands at any port, he has the right to remit all the money he has earned over £10 home. He has not the right to demand any portion of money for his own pocket. That is the difficulty, no doubt; but he is entitled to all the money over £10 to be remitted home or where he likes.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: And you allow advance notes?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That is something; that is a substantial point.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a very substantial improvement on the law, and I hope Mr. Belcher won't press his motion. If Mr. Belcher presses it, we shall have to put on record some counter-resolution of our own; because I would not like it to appear as if we were assenting altogether to the proposal that the sailor should not have the whole of his wages.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Supposing it is not carried. We have come a long way, and I cannot see what objection there can be to the delegations from New Zealand and Australia, even if the other delegations are against them, placing on record their opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Nor I.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Because it can be used hereafter. You would not be compelled to do anything at all, and it would only be the delegations' vote from

distant parts. And if your Act does not work as well as you think, you have that recommendation as far as we are concerned for future action.

THE CHAIRMAN: Very well, I'll put it to the meeting.

MR. DUNLOP: This is really altogether outside Australia, and it is subject to considerations which they have not the opportunity of discussing as we have, and therefore I think it is hardly fair to us that such a proposition should be put.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I am inclined to think Mr. Norman Hill may not object to have on record the opinion of the shipping delegates that they were altogether opposed to it.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is with a view of securing uniformity of legislation, and therefore I could not possibly rule it out of order.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I put it this way. You are against it?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we stand by our Act for the present.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I will ask Mr. Belcher to make it a proportion.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Is it in place of the provisions of our Act?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: It is only a statement of our opinion. It will not be carried, because there will be as many on one side as on the other, but there will be a record of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: What proportion do you suggest?

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Why name the proportion?

MR. BELCHER: Two-thirds.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us divide at once; I think we have exhausted this now.

MR. NORMAN HILL: If our Act does not work well—

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: It will have no effect at all so far as your Act is concerned. It will not be carried, but it will be on record; that is, we shall have it put on the minutes, because we are not coming over here every week, although you might desire to come out to us every year. But having come so far, I think we should put on record our opinion in reference to this point, and that could be used hereafter if you find your Act does not work as you expect.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Will you refer to our Act in your resolution; don't put a mere negative on us. We have done our best last year, and arrived at a settlement which was satisfactory to our seamen. Don't put it on us that we are standing in the way.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I don't put it on you. I merely go for all we can get. I want to put it as a bald opinion from these two delegations that it may hereafter be used, if your Act does not work as well as you think, without our having to come to London again.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is the 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 two-thirds of their wages due at every port where the crew may desire the wages to be paid."

This is the motion of Mr. Belcher. And then there is an amendment.

MR. NORMAN HILL: I would prefer to move that it is not desirable to deal with this question until the Act of this Session has been tested.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is the amendment:—

"That this Conference approves of the principle embodied in Sections 61, 62, and 63 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, with respect to allotment and payment of seamen's wages, which embodies an agreement arrived at between representatives of British shipowners and seamen."