

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

CAPTAIN CHALMERS: According to the duration of the voyage or the nature of the voyage.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I would like to say that a light load-line by itself would be no protection at all, because you might shove the vessel down to that with a deck cargo, and over it would go with the first squall. If you insisted upon a light load-line without saying where the load was to be put, certainly men would put it in the most convenient place. A ship too light would be submerged to the required line or point with a deck cargo or ballast and might go over.

MR. WALTER J. HOWELL: With regard to what you say, I will read another paragraph. "The Committee would also point out that a light load-line, although it might prevent the insufficient loading of a ship, would be no real protection against improper loading."

HON. W. M. HUGHES: You must put your cargo in the bottom and trim the ship.

MR. FERNIE: In some ships you would not be able to do that. They have such a peculiar construction you would have to put some of the cargo above the water-line.

THE CHAIRMAN: This seems to be the position: you have considered the matter very carefully in Australia, and after hearing a good deal of evidence you evidently could not come to a conclusion and referred it to the Merchant Shipping Conference. We have considered the matter over here very carefully, and had a great many witnesses and decided against it. We decided the best method of meeting the difficulty was by more rigid administration. Well, under those circumstances, I suggest to Sir William Lyne it is hardly a case for a load-line.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I do not intend to press that. It seems to me you have a very strong report—a report, I think, I should like to have a copy of. We have still the power to deal with any ship that attempts to leave our shores too light in ballast; we have that power, and there seems to be such an objection to marking a light load line in ballast that it does seem, as Mr. Hughes just now said, you simply put ballast down at the top instead of at the bottom. I do not propose to press it; I think it has been a very good discussion, so that I will not go further with it.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I was just going to suggest that we should amend it to make it read "Advisable that a ship in ballast should be subject to inspection."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I have withdrawn it for the reason that we have the power.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now No. 3:—"That all seamen be engaged only through a Government officer—the Superintendent."

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Might I suggest to Sir William that both 3 and 4 are matters entirely within our own hands.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. 4 I have ruled out of order, because we have already discussed and passed resolutions on it.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: In moving No. 3, there is some difference of opinion, I know. Now under your Merchant Shipping Act seamen can be engaged by any person in regular employment of the shipowner, by any superintendent, that is what your Act provides. And I was asked the question by Mr. Mills the other day.

THE CHAIRMAN: No; all foreign-going ships. You would have to engage your seamen through a superintendent.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Since it only affects us—

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: One moment. Those very methods are enforced here, so that I am advised—

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a very different matter. That is the licensing to supply seamen. You have to engage seamen for foreign trade through a superintendent. That is not the case for the home trade.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: This is the point I wanted to get at. Mr. Mills asked me the other day what would happen in the case of a person who was employed by the shipowner or by a member of his crew—that, I understand, can be done in New Zealand?

MR. MILLS: May I read the New Zealand Act? It says:—"No person other than a superintendent or a person licensed under the last section, or the owner or some person in his constant and exclusive employ, shall supply or engage a seaman to be entered on board any ship."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is done without being licensed to do it. What I want to say about this is this. You, Mr. President, said it was done through a superintendent. We know our Act proposes it a little different to that, and we propose to license, and I certainly do not intend in the Act to allow the master or anyone connected with the ship to engage without they are licensed to engage, for this reason—we have in some of our ports, especially in Newcastle, the officers of the ships that do the damage and give the opportunity to do it, and we propose to license, at any rate in the case Mr. Mills put.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: License generally. The Commission recommends nobody should be licensed.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I know that.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That is entirely a misapprehension of the position.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a very different thing from the engaging by a superintendent.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Engaging before a superintendent. Who appoints that superintendent?

THE CHAIRMAN: The Board of Trade. At least, since last year the Board of Trade; formerly it used to be the Local Marine Board.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Don't you allow any man to be engaged except through the certificate of your superintendent?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is the point, because an objection is raised, and it has been pointed out that cannot be done. What we are proposing is to deal with this matter.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: What you say is not the point at all.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We are proposing this: the Minister may grant a license to any person for engaging seamen.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That is your new Bill.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Yes. That is so far as I am concerned and so far as the Government is concerned. They are not going to allow the present system which is carried on in some of our ports to continue. That is to say, we are going to have someone whom we can trust to deal with this matter, and not allow the crimping that takes place at the present time.

THE CHAIRMAN: But we have absolutely nothing to do with that. We have absolutely nothing to do with any regulations you may make with regard to seamen engaged in Australia. We have our own regulations here, and if it will be of any use at all to you to make clear what our position is, we can supply you with a memorandum. But I do not see why it should come before us to be discussed. You are inviting us to discuss your domestic affairs.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: We do not believe in what Sir William Lyne has said, either.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not really a matter for us to discuss at all.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I do not agree with you, for this reason: We are going to put this thing in an Act, and we are going to vary what you are doing, and the object of this Conference is to try and act unanimously if we can.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, pardon me, so far as sailors engaged in Australia are concerned, we have nothing to do with that. We have nothing to do with regard to your method in engaging seamen.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I know that; but I think it is very much better for you to know what we are going to do in this regard now instead of hereafter.