

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That is the object I had in starting the resolution. Now, I want it to be clearly understood by shipowners that if they come to our coast and trade we have the right to deal with that ship and see she has proper water-tight compartments.

MR. ANDERSON: We have already laid it down that standards as to hull, machinery, boilers, and life-saving appliances, established by the Board of Trade and testified by current certificates, should be accepted for British ships in Australian and New Zealand waters.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: A ship is not seaworthy if she has not water-tight compartments; that is, she is not safe.

MR. NORMAN HILL: But whether she has four, or five or six compartments is a matter to be judged under our own flag.

THE CHAIRMAN: We would not give a ship a certificate that has not water-tight compartments.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: What Sir William Lyne means is, we say, there should be transverse water-tight compartments, and we really think some of the ships on the coast are not seaworthy.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: There is no doubt about that.

MR. DUNLOP: Have they ever gone down?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Sometimes they go right down to the bottom.

MR. ANDERSON: I think this is a very essential point, and I should like to get to the bottom of it. If, as I understand Sir William Lyne, the standard of seaworthiness is not to be established by a Board of Trade certificate, then resolution No. 1 is absolutely valueless.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: It is clearly understood in resolution No. 1, no matter where she came from, if there was necessity to overhaul they had a right to do it.

MR. COX: May I ask this question? Supposing Australia thinks that 463 water-tight compartments are necessary, and a vessel goes out there with five, would Australia say that ship is not seaworthy because she had not so many water-tight compartments?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I think she would have the right to say so.

MR. COX: That is very important. It seems to me in that case any ship that goes to Australian waters, no matter how safe she may be deemed to be in this country, may be held to be unseaworthy when she gets to Australia.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: You assume that we won't regard the Board of Trade certificate at all. We give it the highest record.

MR. COX: That is what I want.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: And we very seldom interfere with it. I want it to be understood, if any untoward circumstances arise where we think a ship should have more water-tight compartments, or that she is not really safe as a passenger-ship, we reserve to ourselves the right to deal with her; and what I want to emphasize is this, we have passed certain resolutions, defining what a trading ship is, that we have control over, and always having regard, in the first instance, to the Board of Trade certificate, which we hold in the highest esteem, and will not interfere with unless there is some really strong reason for doing so—I want it to be understood we reserve to ourselves, under the right of what trading is, to interfere if those ships have something which appears of a serious character which we ought to deal with. That is all I want to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that is all right.

MR. DUNLOP: There is just this difference between foreign ships and British.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want the Australian Commonwealth to extend to us the same—I won't say indulgence—but the same courtesy as we extend to foreign ships here. I mean, take the German regulations, they are quite on all fours with ours, but substantially they comply with our law. That is all we ask. And we ask you to treat us as we treat foreigners.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: All we want to do is to be able if occasion arises, which may never arise. We don't want to mislead you.

MR. COX: In an extreme case you would interfere?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Yes, and we would not touch it otherwise.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now that is withdrawn.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: Now I put down No. 8:—
“That all sea-going ships carrying more than () passengers or being more than 5,000 tons gross measurement shall be fitted with apparatus for transmitting messages by means of wireless telegraphy”—down more for discussion than anything else, because I do not know whether it is practical in all cases; but I want it to be brought before the Conference to obtain an opinion as to how far we can go in having this wireless telegraphy. Now I know that there are various classes—or I do not know what you describe them as—there are various companies or descriptions of wireless telegraphy. There is not only Marconi, but there are a good many other systems, and I do not know whether we have arrived at that stage now when we could compel or request this to be done, because you must use one system right through, I believe, you must use the projector in the shape of the instrument, and you must have the corresponding receiver to be able to work this instrument at all. You cannot take Marconi and apply it to another system.

MR. LEWELLYN SMITH: If the new Convention comes into force, you will be able to.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I made inquiries from Mr. Walker, who is representing Marconi out in Australia, and we are trying experiments now. He has put up, with our consent, one station at Queensland and we have another in Tasmania, and from him I understand you cannot mix up the stations—that is, you cannot mix up one receiver with another projector. So that a ship that is going to use this wireless telegraphy would have to be in connection with a projector of the same class. That is as I understand it, and he has described it very clearly to us in Australia. I do not know whether or not we have got far enough to know which is the best, and which is going to be the one that is to be used. I believe the Admiralty are considering which is the best to use, because their ships will have to be in connection at various points with the same system. There may be some gentleman present who knows more about it than I do; but I have taken a great deal of trouble to find out exactly what the practical effect will be. I have brought this discussion forward for this purpose, that if, shortly, there is one general system adopted, that that general system shall be applied, as far as British ships are concerned, to all passenger ships over the tonnage that I mentioned, or some tonnage to be mentioned. For more than one reason, of course, we know it is a great convenience if you are going a long sea-voyage to be able to know the news of the world as you go along. Going to and from Australia I should very much like to know all the news.

MR. COX: It may be an advantage to address constituents from the steamer.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: In addition to that, it is useful for the safety of human cargo as well as the ship. I saw an instance the other day. Several ships had their shafts broken, and one was drifting about for a long time, and only then was found by accident. I have been told by some of the shipowners that they are trying to obviate that in their own way by putting better shafts and twin screws and turbines with three screws. They are effecting it to some extent, but I think there should be a system adopted before long by which all these vessels should have wireless telegraphy. Now I have just started this expression of opinion, and unless the Conference will agree to it I am not going to debate it. I think it should be brought before the public. All things require to have a start, and that is the reason I brought it forward.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: May I say my sympathies are entirely with Sir William Lyne in this matter. I have for some years been taking a very considerable interest in this wonderful development of telegraphing through the air without a wire. I am anxious,