

## REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

imagine, be not imposing a burden on one, but imposing a very heavy burden on the other.

SIR JOSEPH WARD : I suggest the word "needlessly" be put in.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I don't agree with that. We have words here that create no end of trouble. What is "incidentally"? What is "handicap"? Now if it means only as in regard to other coastal trade, we don't mind that a bit, because we want to handicap outside vessels.

MR. PEMBROKE : It is only a recommendation.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I don't care how it is. If you incidentally or otherwise join in the coastal trade you are liable to all our laws and conditions. It is any coasting trade which you can prove is coasting trade under the interpretation we placed on it in No. 9. If you put the word "incidental" it is like (1) vessels registered in the Colony, (2) vessels wherever registered, under different conditions. I could not think of accepting a proposition of that kind.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : I quite agree with Sir William Lyne that there is some difficulty in the vagueness of such a resolution, but possibly it is meant to meet a case of this sort, that if it were attempted—as it was in some legislation in Australia—which was never passed—to make such conditions that British oversea ships would have to pay Australian rates of wages on the whole of their voyage, that would be handicapping their general trade outside of Australia.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : For my part, I am not going to be curtailed in what we do. In that regard I asked some questions as to what power we had, and I had a very distinct reply that when they came back we should deal with that. I can make no promise so far as I am concerned.

MR. COX : And I can make no promise that that Act won't be disallowed.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : Very well, we will fight it. I am not going to agree to a handicap beforehand.

MR. COX : Well, so long as we understand where we are.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : We have not reached the stage of passing anything at all, but if such a thing as that were attempted, as it was attempted at one period of our Parliamentary history, we must not be surprised that the shipping authorities desire to get some expression of view in that connection. Sir Joseph Ward, I think, made the suggestion of putting in the word "needlessly."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : Then you have to interpret "needlessly."

THE CHAIRMAN : You are your own interpreters.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : If you are going to interpret these resolutions legally, perhaps not one of them will hold water. They are simply suggestions of the opinion of the Conference. Perhaps, with Sir Joseph Ward's addition, we might meet Sir William Lyne.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I want to be left absolutely free. I don't want any words put in which will cause a question as to whether it is needlessly handicapped. We have a bald resolution as it is now, and it is only complicating to my mind the whole question by putting a clause like this in.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : Put the word "over-sea" in front of "trade."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : No; supposing our people like to say you shall trade, but you will have to pay our wages all the voyage, what right have you to say they shall not.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : What is the Conference for? Suppose Great Britain says you shall not impose your law. She could do it.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I don't think she is very likely to.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON : Why are we conferring? We are not conferring on those lines at all. What we are conferring on is what is reasonable, what is fair, what is just to the interests of all concerned, and that is how we ought to look at it.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I don't think this is considering what is just to Australia.

MR. COX : May I ask Sir William Lyne one question. Does he consider that it is just that Australia should legislate for British ships when they are in Valparaiso?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : No. But if they come and trade with us, and take away our trade, we have a right to say what conditions we shall place on them.

MR. COX : During the coasting trade, yes. But when she is on the other side of the globe, are you going to say Australian conditions are going to apply?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : We may or we may not. I don't want to be dictated to.

MR. COX : We don't want to be dictated to. There is perfect freedom of legislation and government all over the world; but we are a nation of 43,000,000, and we object to being legislated for by Australia outside Australia. Where Australia is concerned in her own waters, we bow; but in our own waters and on the high seas, which are the property of all the world, we object to being legislated for by Australia.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I do not know that that is the feeling of the ministry if it is of the officials.

HON. W. M. HUGHES : May I make a suggestion. Does this assist a vessel incidentally engaged in the coasting trade in the course of an oversea voyage? Now, so far as the coasting trade is concerned, I quite agree you cannot make any difference between a vessel incidentally or ordinarily or habitually engaged in the coasting trade, so far as they are actually engaged in the coasting trade for a day, or a month, or a year. I propose, therefore, that you should confine your resolution to that part of the trade which is not incidentally coasting trade. For instance, if you say care should be taken that these conditions should impose the minimum handicap upon these vessels in the oversea trade. What I mean to say is, you could impose such conditions upon British ships under Section 5 of our Constitution as you could not impose upon foreign ships. And, no doubt, the British Government would be very loath indeed to limit our powers under Section 5 provided we made reasonable laws, and those that are reasonable to the Government might really handicap the British shipowner very considerably. We don't want to do that; we want to do the very opposite. I don't want to, personally; I want to handicap the foreigner as much as I know how, and I shall never hesitate to declare it and do it. When a vessel is engaged—say in trading—from Adelaide and Newcastle and loads there for Valparaiso; from Adelaide to Newcastle it is coasting; but we don't want to impose such restrictions as will handicap it when it is quoting for freight Valparaiso against foreigners. But we are very jealous of our rights to keep our coasting trade under conditions which we consider decent and proper. Therefore, if we say that care shall be taken that these conditions shall not be such as to handicap vessels in their oversea trade, that will be sufficient.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE : I go further than that. Let me take a case. Take the case where a ship comes along, a P. and O., or an Orient, and they come and do our trade, and they come under the definition of what is trade, our provisions are that they shall pay certain wages. They pay those wages whilst they are doing that trade, and when they get away from the coast and go to Great Britain they average the wages and pay the same amount to the men they employed between Great Britain and Australia, which means a lower wage when they get away from the coast. What effect has our law? They may snap their fingers at us.

HON. W. M. HUGHES : They may, but you can refuse them their license to trade on the coast. A contract is a contract. If a man signs articles for £4 a month out of London for a round trip to Australia and South America, and he trades for four months on the coast of Australia during those four months, he has to be paid Australian rates. Then when he gets off the coast he must still get not less than £4. If the contract in black and white says he is to get £4, it is not a payment of £4 to give him £2 10s.; and if that vessel does not provide in its Articles