

2 June, 1911.]

NAVIGATION LAW.

[4th Day.]

The CHAIRMAN—*cont.*

status and improve the conditions of seamen employed on such ships." Do you approve of that resolution being passed? [AGREED.] That is carried unanimously.

After a short adjournment.

DEATH OF MRS. BISHOP.

Mr. HARCOURT : I am sure it will be your wish that we should express to one who should have been our colleague at this table our heartfelt condolence. I will ask that there may be conveyed to Mr. Bishop, on behalf of the Conference, an expression of our deepest sympathy with him in the loss he has sustained.

LABOUR EXCHANGES AND EMIGRATION.

"That the Governments of the various Dominions should consider in concert with the Imperial Government the possibility and the best method of utilising the machinery of the national system of Labour Exchanges established in the United Kingdom by the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909, in connection with the notification of vacancies for employment and applications of persons for employment as between the Dominions and the United Kingdom."

Mr. BUXTON : The resolution which I have to move is printed on the Paper, and perhaps I had better read it : "To resolve that the Governments of the various Dominions should consider in concert with the Imperial Government the possibility and the best method of utilizing the machinery of the national system of labour exchanges established in the United Kingdom by the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909, in connection with the notification of vacancies for employment and applications of persons for employment as between the Dominions and the United Kingdom." If that is read in conjunction with another resolution, not printed on the Paper to-day, which is proposed by the Commonwealth of Australia, it asks : "That the Imperial Government be requested to co-operate with any Colonies desiring emigrants in assisting suitable persons to emigrate." When the Board of Trade system of labour exchanges was established in February, 1910, as a national market for labour, concerned solely with questions of industrial efficiency and entirely divorced from the relief of distress, it was realized that the question of its connection with emigration must sooner or later come to the front. From the first the exchanges have from time to time received applications for workpeople from employers in the Dominions, and have, after consultation with the Dominions' representatives in London, endeavoured to fill such vacancies so far as was found desirable and possible. Such action was, however, necessarily spasmodic; and now that the labour exchanges number more than 200 and are filling at this moment between 12,000 and 13,000 vacancies each week (exclusive of persons placed in certain well-defined casual employments), it is thought that some more regular and efficient arrangement might be made to meet what are understood to be the wishes of the Dominions' Governments in the matter. Subject to any modifications which the Dominions' Governments may propose, the following is a brief outline of the method which appears to the Board of Trade to be most practicable. It is suggested that employers in the Dominions should notify their requirements for labour to the Government of the Dominion or State concerned, which should in turn pass on such notifications as it thought suitable to its representative in London. The latter would then report the vacancies to the central office of labour exchanges, who would circulate them to the individual exchanges. In cases where suitable applicants were found it is suggested that the Board of Trade might, subject to the Treasury's approval, make an advance of the necessary travelling expenses. These advances could, however, only be made provided that the Dominion or State Governments were willing to guarantee their repayment. It would, of course, still be open to employers in the Dominions to notify their wants direct to the labour exchanges. In such cases the orders would be dealt with in consultation with the representative of the Dominion's Government in London, but it would not be possible for the Board of Trade to make any advance under the circumstances for travelling expenses. It is the thought that with this safeguard the oversea Governments would have at their disposal official machinery for assisting the migration of suitable people as vacancies offered for their employment, and would be at the same time in a