

2 June, 1911.]

NAVIGATION LAW.

[4th Day.]

Sir JOSEPH WARD—*cont.*

would eventually break down the shipping in our country altogether. I look on the matter as of such importance that at the proper time later on I will probably take a little more time in explaining what I think we ought to do, putting my views on record, even though I should happen to be the only one taking the particular view.

General BOTHA : I have nothing to say at present.

Sir D. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF : I understand this is coming up again?

The CHAIRMAN : Yes.

Sir EDWARD MORRIS : I should like to know, when it is coming up, if we could have a statement of the percentage of British as compared with foreign shipping?

Mr. BUXTON : I will circulate some figures. You mean the figures\* I was quoting in the early part of the forenoon?

Sir EDWARD MORRIS : Yes, the British as compared with the world in percentage. I understand we have something like one-sixth of it.

Mr. BUXTON : I will give some figures which will be of use to the Conference.

Sir EDWARD MORRIS : Also, I would like to be shown the total value of imports last year and the total value of exports from the United Kingdom, and as to whether the unhampered condition of our navigation laws at present has to some extent brought about a favourable result.

Mr. PEARCE : Before we adjourn, some exception was taken to a statement I made that pressure was brought to bear upon the Commonwealth Government. I am just going to give one instance.

Mr. FISHER : Of many.

Mr. PEARCE : Of several, which I think do go beyond the region of suggestions coming from the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade picked out one clause of a Bill, and they started off dealing with it by saying that this was the most important principle which could be dealt with in a Bill—

Mr. BUXTON : Which Bill are you speaking of?

Mr. PEARCE : The Navigation Bill, clause 185. It is at pages 10 and 11 of our own Parliamentary Paper which we circulated in which we set out a memorandum of what had passed between the Board of Trade and ourselves. They urged us not to take the course that the clause proposed to do. On the 28th October, 1908, the Deakin Government cabled back as follows : " Clause 185 " (which was the clause challenged by the Board of Trade) " has been law in New South Wales and Victoria for many years." That is to say, two of the States had been given the power to make this law, which was challenged by the Board of Trade, years before, and it had been in actual operation for many years without complaint or entailing the suggested inconvenience or expense. On the 27th November, 1908, the Secretary of State cabled in reply as follows : " With reference to your telegram of 28th October, the Board of Trade are most anxious to know from your Government as soon as possible if your Ministers consider it essential to insist on extending compulsory survey to all vessels; they earnestly trust that your Act will be administered in the same spirit as

\* See Volume of papers [Cd. 5746—1.]