

16 June, 1911.]

ALL-RED ROUTE.

[10th Day.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE—*cont.*

would cost, and what a 21-knot service would cost. That will take a very considerable amount of time, and I would rather support the suggestion which has been made by Mr. Malan. A Royal Commission has been appointed this morning, I understand, to consider the question of trade relations between the various parts of the Empire, and I should have thought that a Commission of that kind, which would contain representatives of all the various Dominions and of the Mother Country could very well consider a proposition of this kind. If it gave a general affirmation of the principle and as to its feasibility it might proceed to appoint a sub-committee to consider the details for working it out, but I should say, in the first place, it ought to be referred to this Commission to consider the feasibility of the proposal, and afterwards that Commission might very well appoint a sub-committee to consider the details of the scheme. That is the proposal I put forward.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I do not agree with that proposal. After Australia's declaration of opposition to the Pacific Service, I think a Commission which is to extend over all our countries, if this matter is referred to it, simply means deferring it. I would rather reconsider the whole position with a view to doing our own part across the Pacific, between Canada and New Zealand, letting everybody else do what they think proper. I look upon the proposal *via* the Cape, for instance, from either the Australian or the New Zealand point of view, with all due deference to my friends from South Africa, as being highly unsatisfactory from the passenger point of view, as it is a long and at times very rough voyage. I know that absolutely, and I do not want to get into the position, so far as I am concerned, of allowing a red herring to be drawn across the scent, especially with regard to what I conceive to be an impracticable proposition. So from the New Zealand point of view I should certainly not agree to that being included in the Commission's reference. I recognise, of course, that everybody has a right to his own view, but the course suggested would not suit New Zealand.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: If that is the view taken by the New Zealand Government I think there would be very little use in referring it to the Commission. I can quite see the reason why, because two, at any rate, of the elements in the Commission would come in with a hostile intent. I can see that it is not quite in the interest of South Africa to develop a route in the opposite direction, and one of the difficulties we have experienced before, as Sir Joseph knows, is in connection with Australia, the rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney, at least, that is my recollection.

Mr. FISHER: No, there is no rivalry.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: [On the one route Melbourne would be touched first and on the other route Sydney would come first.

Mr. FISHER: That has no bearing on our position. Our position is that we must do the best for the people of Australia in the matter of trade and commerce. We are not putting it forward.

The PRESIDENT: What do you say, Sir Joseph?

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I want to say a word or two. I recognise the difficulties that stand in the way of a proposition for carrying on a service across two oceans separated by the great Dominion of Canada. If the Pacific section of this service had ever been prompted or promoted or suggested on the ground of carriage of goods across the Canadian continent, the point of Mr. Fisher's remarks would be absolutely indisputable, incontrovertible; but no such question of the carriage of goods has ever arisen so far as this All-Red service is concerned, and I want to point out that such an aspect of it has not been a governing one in the past at all.