

*16th June, 1911.]*

ALL-RED ROUTE.

*[10th Day.]*

Dr. FINDLAY: How do they go now?

Mr. FISHER: Partially the one way and partially the other, but mostly through the Suez Canal.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I say that if we attempt to mix a proposal of this kind up with the idea of freighting, or emigrants going across Canada, I do not think the service across the Canadian continent would meet these two points at all; I have never thought so, but if we are to develop and improve trade between Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and to give a through fast mail and passenger service across the Canadian continent, and across the Atlantic to England, in my opinion there is a great deal to be said, even upon sentimental grounds, for what is being proposed by me. I want to make my position quite clear with regard to the suggestion which has been made by Mr. Malan for referring this question to the Royal Commission, and I want to put on record why I object to that. It seems to me that where there are subsidised steamers now trading between England and Australia, and between England and South Africa, and between England and India, they have their contracts in hand and have their service to a large extent on the lines they require; but when a proposal is made which is required, certainly from the New Zealand standpoint and the Canadian standpoint, to suggest that it should be remitted to a Commission composed of representatives from two countries at this Conference, the interest in our particular service would only be an indirect one as far as they are concerned, and in view of the attitude of my friend Mr. Fisher regarding the Canadian Pacific Service, and South Africa's advocacy of another route, it would be obviously a very foolish thing for the advocates of the All-Red route across Canada to New Zealand from the Old Country if a proposal of the kind was referred to a Commission of such a composition as I have mentioned. As against the proposition and I prefer infinitely, whatever the effect of this resolution may be, to commence to consider the desirability of recasting what we have been trying to do for years. I should prefer to work with the Canadian Government entirely as far as the Pacific is concerned, and if they are prepared to assist in establishing a faster mail and packet service direct with New Zealand and from New Zealand direct with Canada I should be prepared to supplement the amount we are paying now to enable that to be done. For friendly reasons and business reasons, I should like very much to see Australia fall in with the Canadian Pacific Service. There is no doubt about it, it has worked very well in the past. We have never envied them the collateral advantages of a service of the kind to Australia, because we have been simply a touching point, and whatever benefits have been derived of a material character, it is Australia that has had them, and not New Zealand, right through. In the case of the San Francisco service it was the same. We gave a large subsidy in comparison with what Australia gave, but we took not the slightest objection to their having their final port in Sydney and allowing the provisions, coaling, docking, and repairs, and all the expenditure to be made there. The benefit in that case was to Australia, although New Zealand was giving the greater proportion of the subsidy with the United States of America. From the friendly standpoint of the two countries being so close together I should like to say, then, even now, deal with the Pacific alone, allowing Canada and the United Kingdom to look after the Atlantic themselves, concerning which it is said by Mr. Lloyd George that there are not so many difficulties as there are in the Pacific. For my part, I should be quite prepared to let the United Kingdom and Canadian Government look after the Atlantic proposals themselves, and in turn with the Canadian Government, if they are prepared to co-operate with New Zealand, to look after the other end ourselves. It seems to me that the difficulty which Mr. Lloyd George has suggested as to who was going to be the party to put into operation a scheme of this sort between scattered countries stands in the way distinctly; but if we are to wait until we are able to get the divided countries to come together on a point of that kind, the Pacific end of it is going to suffer, and it is the Pacific end that I am now concerned in. I believe it would be better for Canada and New Zealand to do that end ourselves, though I should like to see Australia joining with us both in the matter.