

19 June, 1911.] DUES ON VESSELS PASSING THROUGH SUEZ CANAL.

[11th Day.

Mr. FISHER : Letters.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : We send the bulk of our letters that way. We pay 15,000*l.* or 16,000*l.* a year for connecting steamers alone, in order to enable our mails to go through the Suez Canal, and we pay in addition full Postal Union rates for the conveyance of our mails by the Suez Canal route.

Mr. FISHER : But some of them go by our boats, as it is more convenient.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : We pay for that independently.

Mr. FISHER : I know you pay, but I am only pointing out how we are both paying for a quick service. That is the object.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : It is not your subsidised service alone that we patronise ; our mails go by every weekly steamer, and we pay full rates for the carriage of our mails by all of them.

Mr. FISHER : We want to get a quick service ; we desire speedy communication and comfortable accommodation ; any reduction they make of course will probably give us no advantage as a Government. We shall still continue to contribute to give them bigger ships, better ships, and more trade. There is also other trade which is not so urgent as the mails, and even if we get a reduction, the route *via* South Africa will ultimately be a convenient way to send those of our ships which are not in such a great hurry as those carrying mails.

CHAIRMAN : The Resolution is accepted unanimously.

General BOTHA : Australia and South Africa will stand together, and build their own line.

Mr. FISHER : That is a matter which we shall have an opportunity now of considering.

General BOTHA : I am quite prepared to consider it with you.

CHAIRMAN : We shall only have 11 to 1 o'clock, or a little less, for the final sitting of the Conference to-morrow. There will be the Resolution, in two parts, of the Commonwealth of Australia : (1) "That in the opinion of this Conference "it is desirable that the Ministers of the United Kingdom and the Dominions should "between Conferences exchange reciprocal visits so as to make themselves personally "acquainted with all the self-governing parts of the Empire." The second is : "That "the Government of the United Kingdom should take into consideration the possibility "of holding the next Conference in one of the Overseas Dominions." Then will come the Draft Report of the Committee on Military subjects, which I understand is likely to be ready for submission to the Conference to-morrow ; and then we must discuss at our final meeting the question of the publication of our proceedings, which I hope will be published as rapidly and as fully as possible.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 11 o'clock.