

The above scheme was accepted by the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth subject to giving full freedom of action to Australia to decide the method in which Australia will co-operate.

(c.) Shipping.

As regards the report of the Imperial Shipping Committee on Bills of Lading, it was decided to adopt the following resolution :—

“The Conference approves the recommendations made in the report of the Imperial Shipping Committee on the Limitation of Shipowners’ Liability by clauses in bills of lading, and recommends the various Governments represented at the Conference to introduce uniform legislation on the lines laid down by the committee.”

A resolution was also adopted to the effect that, pending the constitution of a permanent Committee on Shipping, the existing Imperial Shipping Committee should continue its inquiries.

The representatives of His Majesty’s Government and the Governments of New Zealand and India were ready to agree to a wider resolution recommending the constitution under Royal Charter of a permanent committee to carry out the duties specified in the report of the Imperial Shipping Committee dated 3rd June, viz. :—

- (i.) To perform such duty as may be entrusted to them under laws in regard to inter-Imperial shipping, applicable to the whole or to important parts of the Empire :
- (ii.) To inquire into complaints in regard to ocean freights and conditions in inter-Imperial trade, or questions of a similar nature referred to them by any of the Governments of the Empire :
- (iii.) To exercise conciliation between the interests concerned in inter-Imperial shipping :
- (iv.) To promote co-ordination in regard to harbours and other facilities necessary for inter-Imperial shipping.

The representative of Canada, however, did not agree to this wider resolution, and the representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Union of South Africa reserved the matter for further consideration.

The position as regards rebates was discussed, and strong representations were made by Dominion Ministers in regard to it ; but no resolution was passed, it being understood that the matter is at present under consideration by the Imperial Shipping Committee.

(d.) Wireless Telephony.

The present position regarding the development of wireless telephony was explained, and the following resolution was adopted :—

“That the Radio Research Board be asked to investigate the subject of wireless telephony, and to report on its development, whether Governmental or private.

“That the Postmaster-General shall supply to the Governments of the Dominions and India technical reports showing its position and possibilities.”

(e.) Cable and Wireless Rates for Press Messages.

The Special Committee on Communications received a deputation representing the Empire Press Union and the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association, and subsequently Mr. Robert Donald, chairman of the Empire Press Union, made representations to them on the subject of wireless telegraphy.* The following resolution was agreed to and thereafter adopted by the main Conference :—

“The committee agrees with the resolution passed at the Second Imperial Press Conference, held at Ottawa in 1920, that any assistance given by the Governments of the Empire towards the reduction of rates for Press services by wireless and cable should appear specifically in the estimates of public expenditure, and should be so directed as not to affect the quality of the news service or the freedom of the newspapers so served.

“The committee is in full sympathy with the object of reducing rates, both by cable and wireless, for Press messages, and recommends the most favourable examinations by the Governments concerned of any practicable proposals to this end.”

* Memoranda handed in by the deputation are printed in Appendix IV.