

I was elected as an employers' representative on the Wages, Hours, and Manning Committee, and also to the Entry, Training, and Promotion of Seafarers Committee. However, the former Committee, which considered most of the vital questions and which was the first to commence work and the last to complete, occupied my full time, and I therefore could not attend other Committees working simultaneously.

The International Labour Office held a preliminary Conference at Copenhagen in November-December, 1945 (at which New Zealand was not represented), and the recommendations of Copenhagen were considered at Seattle with a view to having them fully discussed and, if agreed upon there, to recommend their adoption and ratification by the Governments of the participating countries. New Zealand is invited to ratify the proposals and become a permanent member of the International Labour Office.

It was freely stated at Seattle "that the Conference was not laying down national laws or regulations, but international minima which should apply to all nations and render possible the co-operation of Government, managements, and workers to avoid the necessity of uneconomic competition and inhuman working conditions, also to improve the social and economic conditions of seafaring men throughout the world."

The Seattle Conference is probably the first from which any request for an international minimum wage and conditions has emanated, but it was claimed that shipping by virtue of its comprehensive ramifications, is a most suitable industry for that application.

A proposal was put forward by the workers' delegates that an International Shipping Authority be set up to allocate the amount of tonnage each country could operate. Fortunately, this proposal was voted out, the majority agreeing that a nation should be free to maintain its merchant fleet to a size capable of meeting its internal and external requirements.

During the course of the deliberations many references were made to the shipping position of the United States of America, which country at present owns over 50 per cent. of the world's tonnage and where the Government pay shipowners what is generally called a subsidy. This matter was fully debated, and without comment I quote the reply by the United States Government delegate :—

The fact is that Congress in 1936 adopted a law which provided not for subsidies but for an equalization of compensation by the Government which would enable the United States to maintain a merchant marine of sufficient size to take care of a substantial portion of the shipping of the products of the United States . . .

. . . The Shipping Act provides that no licensed officer or seaman in the deck or engine-room department shall be required or permitted to work more than eight hours in any one day except in the case of extraordinary emergency affecting the safety of the vessel and/or life or property.

Copies of the full discussions and the resolutions will shortly be arriving, but I have briefly set out the salient points in the following sheets.

Yours faithfully,

S. HOLM.

## ENCLOSURE TO CAPTAIN S. HOLM'S REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CONFERENCE AT SEATTLE, JUNE, 1946

### No. 1

Discussion on Director's report.

### No. 2.—*Social Security for Seafarers*

The Conference recommended member countries to agree to pay a pension to seafarers on attaining the age of fifty-five or sixty years at a rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. or 2 per cent. on the basis of their contributions of approximately 10 per cent. of salaries, plus at least equal payments by shipowners.