

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

country, in which we only interfere with the ship when it is unfit to go to sea. We have not gone the length of having an official survey in every case. You would, however, not want so many surveyors as we do.

MR. JAMES MILLS: The whole point appears to be easy of solution. Under our Shipping Act, clause 185, where a certificate has been granted to any ship by the Imperial Board of Trade and is still in force, that steamship need not be again surveyed under this Act.

MR. NORMAN HILL: That is the passenger steamer.

MR. JAMES MILLS: Why should not the Board of Trade give a certificate if it is warranted?

MR. NORMAN HILL: We despatch a vessel to South America, but you do not know what her next voyage will be. You may go to Europe, New Zealand, or North America—you do not know where she is going. Before we start that vessel we should have to subject her, if you like, to an equivalent of your passenger survey. Our Act of Parliament provides no compulsory surveys.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: In every instance your passenger steamers have passenger certificates?

MR. NORMAN HILL: Yes.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Now, instead of asking the Colony to alter its laws, is it not a practical solution of it for the Imperial Government to say that the cargo steamers shall obtain the Board of Trade certificate, and the whole thing is ended?

CAPTAIN CHALMERS: That would be impracticable.

MR. NORMAN HILL: The Treasury would not give the money.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Your Lloyd's surveyors could be appointed officials under your Board of Trade.

MR. WALTER J. HOWELL: That would be quite against the whole spirit of the English law under which the surveys have to be Government surveys, and in considering the acceptance of the surveys of German and other ships under our new Act, we are laying it down as a condition that every ship should have a certificate of Government survey, not the certificate of any commercial body.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Very well then, make it a Government survey.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: As Sir Joseph Ward has said, the New Zealand Act goes a long way towards meeting these points. You accept, of course, our passenger certificate.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: They have no passenger certificates.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: When we get to the cargo boats, if the cargo boats voluntarily undergo our survey, then you accept that certificate. It only remains, therefore, to consider cargo boats which do not, and that we might consider further—I mean the question whether we can meet them.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: That is the crux of the whole difficulty. This is of course a New Zealand Act. Now if Sir William Lyne is in accord with the New Zealand Act in that respect it would go a long way.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: If Australia would go as far as New Zealand has already gone, we might consider it—it goes a long way.

MR. BELCHER: I should like to ask for what length of time are the certificates granted—the British certificates.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Twelve months.

MR. BELCHER: Then I would like to ask this question. In the event of one of your vessels which is running under a certificate making a long voyage and eventually reaching New Zealand, if that certificate has expired, would there be any objection on the part of the shipowners or the Imperial authorities to allow that ship to be resurveyed under the conditions which

prevail in New Zealand? The difficulty I see in connection with the matter is that some of your ships leave Britain and they are away for very long terms—I believe in some cases it reaches as much as three years. That in the opinion of our authorities in New Zealand is too long for any ship to run without examination. There may be a defect, brought under the notice of the New Zealand authorities for instance, and simply because that vessel comes to New Zealand with a Board of Trade certificate which has expired, the New Zealand authorities would not be able to put their examiner on board that ship to find out what defects there really are.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: I think we may take it that we mean by certificate an unexpired certificate—a certificate that is in force.

MR. BELCHER: How many of them must there be which are expired while the vessels are running on these long voyages?

MR. NORMAN HILL: The only certificates which exist belong to liners, the other ships do not carry certificates. Those to which we have referred have gone voluntarily and said, "Although we do not want to carry passengers, will you please survey us as if 'we did.'" Of course, there is one point we must bear in mind. The test applied by the Board of Trade to passenger liners is far in excess of the standard of seaworthiness. The difficulty I see, as our Act now stands—our Merchant Shipping Act—is that the Board of Trade has no power to issue such certificates.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: It can get it.

MR. NORMAN HILL: You say it can get it, but if you have any experience of getting anything out of our Parliament—we have nearly broken the President's heart worrying him over the Bill of last Session.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Mr. Norman Hill I think will agree with me that if the shipowners were unanimous in approaching the Board of Trade, asking them to pass a Bill so that they might voluntarily subject their ships to its examination with a view to getting a certificate, I do not think the Board of Trade would put any obstacles in the way of that Bill passing.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not the Board of Trade. It is getting it through Parliament.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I do not think Parliament would object on a matter where we were unanimous.

MR. ANDERSON: Should we be unanimous?

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: If you think of the position of Newcastle in Australia, where we are getting ships practically from all parts of the world—not British ships—which come for coal—if we had not the power to survey these ships they could do what they liked, so that we cannot give up the power to survey if it is necessary. I passed a Navigation Act—I think it was the last year I was in the State Parliament—in consequence of some of these and other ships that were not seaworthy going to sea and foundering.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: We have all that provided for.

MR. NORMAN HILL: We do not want to interfere with your power to detain unseaworthy ships.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: We want the power to see whether they are seaworthy or not, especially ships you have no control over, and there are a very large number of foreign ships which come to Newcastle. I instance that because they would come under any Act we agreed to pass. We have had a great deal of trouble—we had eight ships in one year which left the port of Newcastle for foreign ports and were never heard of or were known to have foundered.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: That power we have now—we can survey any ship.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: You can, but we want the right to do it.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Yes, we have the Marine Department—a Navigation Department—and we had a case only a short time ago.