

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: I do not think that is a question which is raised. The question is not as to whether there should be power to survey, if it is considered necessary to survey, but whether the survey having already taken place, it should be recognised in Australia over the period for which it is issued. That is the point I understand.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: As it is in New Zealand?

HON. DUGALD THOMSON: Yes.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: I understood it was as to the power of survey?

MR. NORMAN HILL: It is the question here of standards, not seaworthiness. For instance, the Board have got one theory with regard to the construction of boilers and Lloyds have got another. Probably there is hardly anything to choose between the two. They are both equally effective, and the ship which is up to either standard is thoroughly seaworthy. Now that is quite different from the ship which has departed from both these standards. If the ship has departed from both those standards and is unseaworthy there is public danger, and she should be stopped, but if she has conformed to one of those standards it would be unreasonable to enforce a third—if you please, equally good standard, or if you please, a slightly better standard—which did not really affect the seaworthiness. That is the point we are on. It is this question of standards, not seaworthiness.

THE CHAIRMAN: Take this, Sir William, here is the New Zealand Act, "Where a certificate has been granted to any steamship by the Imperial Board of Trade and is still in force, that steamship need not be again surveyed."

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: That was just the point which was objected to.

THE CHAIRMAN: That does not prevent your surveying it if you have good reason to believe that the vessel is unseaworthy.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: There is provision in the Bill; this reference is not so much to the report of the Royal Commission, because it does not deal, as a matter of fact, with the survey except as to the necessity of inspectors which the Bill provides; that is the Commonwealth Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the new Bill.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: The Australian Bill, the original Bill on which the Royal Commission sat, and it has not been altered, I think I am correct in saying, in that respect.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: What is that?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Section 198. "The Minister may, if he is satisfied that the immediate resurvey of any steamship would occasion unreasonable or unnecessary expense or inconvenience, and that no danger to a ship or crew, passenger, or cargo will arise from the extension, extend the time for her next resurvey and the currency of her certificate of survey for any period not exceeding one month," that is not very much. And Clause 202, "In cases where the Minister is satisfied in regard to any British ship not registered in Australia or any foreign ship that the requirements of this Act have been substantially complied with, he may:—

"(a) dispense with any further survey of the ship; and
 "(b) give a certificate which shall have the same effect as if given upon survey under this Act.
 "Provided that the Governor-General may direct that this section shall not apply in cases where it appears to him that reciprocal treatment is not given to Australian ships."

THE CHAIRMAN: You want to give something further than that, and have each survey recognised?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Of course, this is the Minister; we have no Board of Trade.

MR. NORMAN HILL: We do not want to interfere with your provisions for the unsafe ships; we keep that quite distinct.

3—A. 5A.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: Mr. President, might I be allowed to move a motion, putting on record what we are trying to get at: "That it be a suggestion to the Board of Trade to provide for the issue of survey certificates in the case of non-passenger vessels."?

CAPTAIN CHALMERS: That would be quite impracticable.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: That it be a suggestion?

THE CHAIRMAN (to Captain Chalmers): Why?

CAPTAIN CHALMERS: From the point of view of present practice, I may say the passenger ships that we do survey are about one-fifteenth part of our tonnage, so that we would have to multiply our surveyors by 15. It would be about 2,100 instead of 140. We would have to have 2,100 for our mercantile marine, and we do not survey the passenger ships every day; we survey them once in 12 months.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: I would suggest to Sir Joseph Ward that that does not get over the point raised. That is that there should be recognition of British certificates.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: We have got that in our Act.

HON. W. M. HUGHES: Yes; but that is the point at issue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; that does not quite meet it.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I think the point is, to meet the difficulties of the shipowners who complain that in the Colonies their survey is not recognised by what is the Board of Trade in the Colonies. Now in our country, the Marine Department recognises the Board of Trade certificates, and we say so in our Act. We make no difference between passenger and other ships. We say, "Where a certificate has been granted to any steamship." Now the point arises; you issue a Board of Trade certificate to passengers steamers, but to a cargo steamer a Lloyd's certificate is issued. Let the option be at the disposal of the shipowner to say which he will have. If he elects to take the Lloyd's certificate, he goes out to the Colonies with the certain knowledge that he may be called upon by the Marine Department there to have a fresh survey because he has not a Board of Trade certificate. He can take the risk therefore.

MR. NORMAN HILL: If the Board would accept Lloyd's certificate it would save us the extra fees.

MR. LLEWELLYN SMITH: We will consider that. It is a very big thing for us. I undertake that the Board of Trade considers that.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: I think my resolution would be: "That it be a suggestion to the Board of Trade to provide for the issue of a survey certificate in the case of non-passenger vessels." If they elect to accept for their guidance Lloyd's Surveyor's Authority to issue a certificate, why should not they?

MR. NORMAN HILL: It is complete as regards New Zealand, but to make that of practical value it would have to be followed on behalf of Australia; if such certificates are granted for oversea traffic, will they be accepted?

HON. W. M. HUGHES: That is the point.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: In our country it is beyond all question. We accept the Imperial Board of Trade certificate for any steamship without distinction.

SIR WILLIAM LYNE: But you reserve yourself the right not to do so. Before I personally agree to it I should like to consider it well.

MR. NORMAN HILL: Might I put it to the Board of Trade in this way. That although a British vessel holds a passenger certificate, if any one of the Board's officers thinks that at any particular moment she is an unsafe ship, could that vessel be stopped? I mean, sir, although she has a passenger certificate and it is still running. The surveyor would at once stop her in this country.

SIR JOSEPH WARD: And in our country, too.

THE CHAIRMAN: So there is no suggestion we should interfere with your discretion—and the same thing will apply to your own certificate.