

measure. There is a very useful and full explanatory note on the reverse side of page 1 of the bill.

Admiralty jurisdiction, as established in the Dominion of Canada, will be found at the present time in chapter 33 of the revised statutes of Canada, and that jurisdiction is founded upon the limitations imposed or the permission granted to what in the early days were colonies and are now dominions to pass acts in conformity with certain acts passed by the parliament of the United Kingdom in regard to the subject of admiralty law and the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty throughout the empire. The acts of the United Kingdom upon which this jurisdiction was originally founded were those passed by the parliament of Great Britain in 1840, again in 1861 and again in 1890, as well as the most recent consolidation of the various courts of admiralty acts in the act known as the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, passed in 1925.

The admiralty jurisdiction established in this country under chapter 33 of the revised statutes of Canada was so established in the year 1890, and it has continued in force for the last forty-four years with very slight amendments. However, it will be remembered that at the imperial conference held in 1927 a review was made not only of the admiralty and merchant shipping acts but also of the Colonial Laws Validity Act, and at that conference it was agreed that a special committee should be set up to consider the operation of these acts in regard to the various dominions constituting the British Empire. A new constitutional status was established as between the United Kingdom and the various dominions of the British Empire at the conference of 1927, and the report of that conference was subsequently carried into effect at the conference which met in London in 1930. In the interval the special committee which had been set up in 1927 went exhaustively into the question of shipping and also into the question of administration of the admiralty law throughout the British Empire. My hon. friend from Quebec East (Mr. Lapointe) was a member of that special committee which sat in London in 1929, and the report of the committee was formally adopted at the imperial conference in 1930.

At the Imperial Conference of 1930 it was also decided to adopt a new constitutional act to be known as the statute of Westminster for the purpose of confirming the conclusions which had been reached at the

[Mr. Guthrie.]

conferences of 1927 and 1930. In 1931 the statute of Westminster was passed by the parliament of the United Kingdom, and in the following year a similar statute was passed by this parliament. The effect of the adoption of that statute both in Great Britain and in Canada has been to extend the jurisdiction of the Dominion of Canada, to make it practically co-extensive with the jurisdiction of the parliament of the United Kingdom in respect to admiralty laws and the establishment of courts of admiralty throughout the British Empire. It is to be noted that in the report made by the special committee in 1929 it was emphasized that so far as possible there should be uniform jurisdiction and procedure in all admiralty courts throughout the British commonwealth, subject, however, to such variations as might be required in matters of purely local and domestic interest. In the drafting of their bill it has been sought to make the admiralty law of Canada conformable to the admiralty court legislation of Great Britain as set out in the act passed by the parliament of the United Kingdom in 1925, which is the latest enactment of Great Britain on the subject; and it has also been the object of the draftsmen of the present measure to make such special provision as may be necessary in regard to matters of purely local and domestic interest in regard to the administration of admiralty law in the Dominion of Canada.

I may say that this bill has been prepared by the law officers of the Department of Justice, and great care has been exercised in its preparation. It was introduced originally in the Senate of Canada, where it was given very grave and careful consideration. The Senate made an exhaustive examination of the various clauses of the bill, passed the measure and sent it to this chamber for consideration. I am aware, of course, that a great many hon. members of this chamber are not very familiar with admiralty law or admiralty courts; those of us who live in the inland parts of Canada have little experience either with admiralty law or with admiralty courts, but having given the bill the best attention I am able to bestow upon it, and having obtained advice from men well qualified to offer opinions in regard to such matters, I am satisfied that the present measure very comprehensively embodies the admiralty laws of Great Britain and provides for their application to the Dominion of Canada with such alterations and variations as may be necessary to ensure that all local and special interests pertaining to the Dominion of Canada have been safeguarded.