

TIGHT BINDING.

XVI.—SHIPPING.

General questions arising in connection with shipping policy, including the work of the Imperial Shipping Committee, were referred to a Committee on Shipping Questions under the chairmanship of the Hon. Walter Nash, M.P., Minister of Finance, New Zealand.

The Committee reviewed the position regarding British shipping (by which is meant all shipping registered as British wherever the registration be effected) in relation to the needs of the several parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and realised that the maintenance of adequate British shipping is a matter of common concern to the countries of the Commonwealth.

The Committee also noted that certain forms and methods of discrimination have latterly been adopted by Governments outside the Commonwealth, whereby British shipping in certain areas is seriously prejudiced if not threatened with entire elimination.

The Committee recommended accordingly that the Conference should reaffirm the Declaration relative to overseas shipping of the Imperial Economic Conference of 1923,* and that in any case in which it may be considered by the Government of one part of the British Commonwealth that undue assistance, to the serious prejudice and danger of British shipping, is being given by any Government outside the British Commonwealth, there should be an opportunity for consultation between the Government of that part of the Commonwealth whose shipping is endangered and the Government of any other part of the Commonwealth concerned, in order to determine the validity of the complaint and the best means of meeting the situation, due regard being had to the interests of the Government of that other part of the Commonwealth.

One case of difficulty, arising out of the competition of subsidised ships running across the Pacific between the United States and New Zealand and Australia is under consideration by the

* The Declaration reads as follows:—

"In view of the vital importance to the British Empire of safeguarding its overseas carrying trade against all forms of discrimination by foreign countries, whether open or disguised, the representatives of the Governments of the Empire declare—

"(1) That it is their established practice to make no discrimination between the flags of shipping using their ports, and that they have no intention of departing from this practice as regards countries which treat ocean-going shipping under the British flag on a footing of equality with their own national shipping.

"(2) That in the event of danger arising in future to the overseas shipping of the Empire through an attempt by a foreign country to discriminate against the British flag, the Governments of the Empire will consult together as to the best means of meeting the situation."

Governments concerned (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) with a view to maintaining British shipping on this route. This question was referred by the Committee to a Sub-Committee representing the four Governments, which reported that its discussions had not reached finality. The matter will continue to be dealt with by the four Governments in consultation.

The Committee also noted that the Imperial Shipping Committee is at present engaged upon an investigation into the position of British shipping in Middle and Far Eastern waters, having regard to the increased competition of foreign flags.

The Committee was informed that additional statistics relating to shipping are now being compiled in the United Kingdom, and each of the Governments represented on the Committee expressed willingness in principle to arrange for the provision of similar statistics in respect of their import and export trade.

The Conference approved the Report of the Committee, and, on the recommendation of the Committee, adopted the following resolution with regard to the work of the Imperial Shipping Committee:—

(1) The Conference expresses to Sir Halford Mackinder, Chairman of the Imperial Shipping Committee, and to the members and staff of the Committee, its warm thanks for the very valuable work which the Committee has done in the interests of the Governments and the commercial communities of the British Commonwealth of Nations;

(2) The Conference notes that the Committee has established itself as a very useful instrument for co-operative examination of the shipping problems of the British Commonwealth, with a tradition of unanimity now extending over 17 years;

(3) The Conference is of opinion—

(a) that it is desirable that the Committee should be continued on the present basis, following the general lines proposed by the Imperial Committee on Economic Consultation and Co-operation in 1933, and deriving authority from and being responsible to, the Governments represented at the Imperial Conference. The Conference would welcome the addition of a representative of Burma to the Committee;

(b) that a sum of £2,000 per annum should continue to be provided for the work of the Committee in respect of each year up to and including the year ending 31st March, 1943, and that the cost should be borne by the

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