

MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SAFETY OF
LIFE AT SEA TO BE HELD IN LONDON 1928.**

SUGGESTED REVISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RULES OF THE
ROAD AT SEA.

The British Government has invited all the governments of the world having maritime interests to an official Governmental International Conference on safety of life at sea. The date, which was at first set for the autumn of 1928, has now been postponed until the spring of 1929.

The United States Government has appointed a large inter-departmental committee of officers and officials of the Navy Department, Shipping Board, Army Transport Service, Department of Commerce and State Department to study the proposals. The American delegation will presumably be drawn largely from this committee. The views of private bodies are, however, sought. It is not yet clear whether opportunity will be given to private individuals and unofficial shipping bodies to express their views to the American delegates.

For the purpose of obtaining the views of the shipping community, the Commissioner of Navigation has prepared the enclosed "Notes on Rules of the Road," displaying in parallel col-

umns the present rules which it is proposed to alter, the British and other proposals as to alterations, and the recommendations which have been phrased to date by the United States Government's committee. A large blank space has been left for the expression of the views of any member of the shipping community who desires to make use of it. The Commissioner of Navigation in his foreword asks that answers be sent in by the first of September, but as the time is too short for organized action by our Association, he will be requested to receive our views at a later date.

Our Association has already had one more or less informal committee to consider the revisions proposed in Great Britain with a view to having some expressions of opinion prior to the meeting of the International Shipping Conference in London last June. That committee made its report at the annual meeting in May, which was received and ordered printed and was subsequently sent to all the members as Document No. 145.

The International Shipping Conference, when it met in June, is reported in "Fairplay" (June 21, 1928, pp. 693-695) to have received a unanimous committee report in favor of the following amendments to the existing Collision Regulations: A second white masthead light to be compulsory, a permanent fixed stern light to be compulsory, a special day signal for auxiliary vessels to be compulsory, a special signal to be established for long tows, addition of radio signals to the distress signals now authorized. As to helm orders, the order given to the man at the wheel should indicate the direction in which the ship should turn, with the recommendation that the practice should be uniform throughout the world. It was apparently also recommended that Great Britain, if it were to change from the indirect to the direct method of helm order, must have two new and dissimilar words for the old "port" and "starboard" so as to prevent confusion between the old method and the new. The report and the resolutions were carried unanimously.

In view of this situation, every member of the Association who is interested in the subject is requested to examine the enclosed "Notes on the Rules of the Road" and to make such comments thereon as he desires and return the same to Harold S.

Deming, Secretary, 27 William Street, New York City, as soon as conveniently possible. Upon consideration of the answers received, the President will thereupon appoint a committee to consider the whole matter and bring in a report. If time allows, it is hoped to have this report printed and distributed to all the members and thereupon to hold a meeting for the special consideration of this matter so that our considered views as a body of admiralty lawyers may be presented to the Government's delegates.

HAROLD S. DEMING,
Secretary.

August 1, 1928.