

DOCUMENT No. 149

MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES

**PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA**

The State Department has sent me the following letter stating the present position of the United States Government towards the conference proposed by the British Government. This letter gives the general background of the suggestions as to revising the Rules of the Road at Sea, dealt with in Document No. 148, and explains the scope of the proposed conference.

HAROLD S. DEMING,
Secretary.

August 10, 1928.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

August 9, 1928

Harold S. Deming, Esquire,
Secretary, Maritime Law Association of
the United States,
27 William Street,
New York, New York.

Sir:

The Department has received your letter of August 1, 1928, in which you request information relative to the forthcoming Conference for the Revision of the Convention of 1914 on Safety of Life at Sea.

The Department received a note from the British Embassy, dated September 30, 1927, to which was attached a memorandum of the British Board of Trade containing proposals for the revision of the Convention of 1914 for the Safety of Life at Sea, which provides for the destruction of derelicts and ice patrol in the North Atlantic Ocean, the construction of vessels, radio-telegraphy, life-saving appliances and fire protection on vessels and for safety certificates.

Shortly after the receipt of this note, representatives, as shown on the list of which two copies are enclosed, of the interested Governmental Departments met at the Department of State to consider the proposals presented by the British Government. An Interdepartmental Committee was organized, from whose meetings resulted the decision to accept the British proposals as a basis for the revision of the Convention of 1914. The Conference for revising the Convention will be held in London on a date, not yet determined, after the first of April in the spring of 1929.

It is believed that the success of the Conference will depend largely upon the cooperation received by the Government from the private maritime interests. For this reason the Department

notes with appreciation your interest in the questions involved and your desire to cooperate with the technical committees of this Government.

In conformity with the sense of a meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee held at the Department of State on January 21, 1928, it was decided that the Department of Commerce should be charged with the organization of the technical committees to study the proposals of the British Board of Trade. These committees have been organized as follows:

Committee on Ship Construction: Chairman, Rear Admiral George H. Rock, Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, Navy Department. This Committee has three subcommittees; namely: (1) Subdivision of Ships: Chairman, Rear Admiral J. G. Tawresey, United States Shipping Board. (2) Fire Extinguishing Appliances: Chairman, Captain N. B. Nelson, Supervising Inspector, Steamboat Inspection Service, Department of Commerce. (3) Life-saving Appliances: Chairman, D. N. Hoover, Supervising Inspector General, Steamboat Inspection Service, Department of Commerce.

Committee on Wireless Telegraphy: Chairman, Mr. W. D. Terrell, Chief, Radio Division, Department of Commerce.

Navigation Committee: Chairman, Captain C. S. Kempff, Hydrographer, Navy Department; which also has three subcommittees; namely: (1) Ice Patrol: Chairman, Rear Admiral F. C. Billard, Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard, Treasury Department. (2) Meteorology: Chairman, Professor Charles F. Marvin, Chief of Weather Bureau, Department of Agriculture. (3) Prevention of Collisions at Sea: Chairman, Captain F. K. Hill, United States Shipping Board.

A general Executive Committee has been organized of which Mr. A. J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation, Department of Commerce, is Chairman.

The technical committees hold regular meetings at least once a month, and the next regular meetings of all the committees are scheduled for the fourth week in August. It is suggested that you direct any suggestions in regard to technical matters which The Maritime Law Association may desire to have considered by any of these committees to the Chairmen of the respective committees or to the Chairman of the Executive Com-

mittee. It is suggested that the comments on the "Notes on the Rules of the Road" be sent to the Commissioner of Navigation at an early date rather than to await the designation of the American Delegation. Any questions of larger policy should be addressed to me as Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee.

The Interdepartmental Committee has not made public up to the present time any statements or reports.

The American Delegates, who of course will be appointed by the President, have not yet been designated or nominated. The matter of the nominations is, however, now under consideration.

The Department will be pleased to forward information to you as to the personnel of the American Delegation as soon as that may be done.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

For the Secretary of State:

W. R. CASTLE, JR.,
Assistant Secretary.

Enclosures:

List of Representatives on
Interdepartmental Committee

REPRESENTATIVES AND ALTERNATES ON THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL
COMMITTEE FOR CONFERENCE IN REGARD TO THE
SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA.

March 10, 1928.

Department of State:

Mr. William R. Castle, jr., Assistant Secretary of State.
Mr. Charles M. Barnes, Assistant Solicitor.

Department of the Treasury:

Rear Admiral F. C. Billard, Commandant, U. S. Coast
Guard.
Lieutenant E. M. Webster, U. S. Coast Guard.

Department of the Navy:

Rear Admiral Geo. H. Rock, Assistant Chief, Bureau of
Construction and Repair.

Department of War:

Major William R. Blair, Signal Corps.

Department of Agriculture:

Professor Charles F. Marvin, Chief of Weather Bureau.
Mr. Edgar B. Calvert, Chief of the Forecast Division of
the Weather Bureau.

Department of Commerce:

Mr. A. J. Tyrer, Commissioner of Navigation.
Mr. D. N. Hoover, Supervising Inspector General, Steam-
boat Inspection Service.

United States Shipping Board:

Mr. A. M. Boal, Admiralty Counsel.
Mr. George Parson, Acting Director, Bureau of Opera-
tions.

Secretary to Committee:

Mr. Vinton Chapin, Department of State.