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THE

MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

At a meeting of the Maritime Law Association of the United States, held in the City of New York on the 5th of May, 1916, the following Resolutions were adopted:

Resolved: That this association heartily concurs in the statements and recommendations made by the Secretary of State to the President March 13, 1914, approving and recommending the adoption of the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, signed at London January 20, 1914.

Resolved: That this association respectfully requests the President to communicate with the governments of the various countries which have already ratified the said convention, and to request that the ratification by the President and Senate of the United States be now deposited at London with the same force and effect as if it had been there deposited in December, 1914.

Resolved: That this association respectfully urges upon Congress that this country should not attempt to interfere with the discipline or contractual arrangements of any foreign ship without international agreement. We therefore respectfully request that changes in our shipping laws affecting foreign vessels in respect of seamen's wages be not made except as the result of treaty or convention, and that existing legislation so affecting foreign commerce be repealed.

This action of the Association was made after consideration of the report of a Committee consisting of Everett P. Wheeler, Chairman, Hon. Charles P. Hough, Hon. Harrington Putnam, Chas. C. Burlingham and Chas. R. Hickox, appointed to consider the Act of Congress of March 4, 1915, commonly called the "Seamen's Act," in its relation to the recommendations of the International Convention relating to safety of life at sea, commonly known as the "Convention of London," signed

January 20, 1914. That Committee reported that although the Convention of London had been approved by the Senate of the United States, it had not become obligatory or binding upon any citizens of this country because of the failure of the Secretary of State to communicate the ratification of the Convention to the other contracting parties. It also reported that the differences between the Act of Congress and the Convention of London were in brief as follows:

1. Section 4 of the Statute provides that at every port of call a seaman shall be entitled to receive one-half of the wages which he has then earned.

2. Section 7 substantially repeals all existing provisions of law in respect of desertion or other offences committed in port.

3. Section 11 imposes many and novel restrictions upon the allotment of seamen's wages.

4. Section 13 differs from the Convention scheme in respect to the percentage of the crew who should be rated as able seamen.

The foregoing differences constitute the positive handicaps upon American shipping as compared with competing foreign vessels.

The following differences consist of omissions from the statute of many important provisions of the Convention of London:

5. The destruction of derelicts and ice patrol, Chap: 3, Articles 5-9.

6. The new rule of navigation in the vicinity of ice, Art. 10.

7. Revision of International Rules for preventing collisions, with reference to lights and signals; Art. 14.

8. Construction of vessels, Chap. 4.

9. Radio-telegraphy; Chap. 5.

10. The prevention of carriage, either as cargo or ballast of goods likely to injure the lives of the passengers or safety of the vessel. Art. 55.

11. All provisions for international safety certificates; Chap. 7.

12. The requirement of the Convention that vessels shall have sufficient power for going astern to secure proper control of the vessel in all circumstances. Regulations, Art. 22.

The foregoing statement of differences, accompanied by the Resolutions are by the direction of the Association distributed for the purpose of urgently setting forth the views of this Association as to the propriety and necessity of securing uniformity among all civilized nations in respect of shipping in foreign trade and the unfortunate and unnecessary position assumed by the United States through the adoption of the Seamen's Act and failure to communicate the ratification of the Convention of London, as required by Article 71 of the Convention.

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