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JOINT MARITIME COMMISSION

Safety measures at sea and seamen's welfare, particularly in ports, were discussed by the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Office, consisting of representatives of shipowners and seafarers, during its meetings in London throughout Saturday and today.

It was generally agreed that there were certain aspects of life-saving which were best calculated to protect seafarers in time of war and that the International Labour Office should be requested to impress them upon individual governments. Shipowners and seamen were unanimously of opinion that the paramount consideration should be the safety of seamen and that no question of expense should be allowed to stand in the way of adopting practical and effective measures.

The provision of mechanically operated davits in new tonnage and, where practicable, in ships now in use; the provision of a suitable compass, signal pistols, waterproof charts and first-aid kit; and the appointment of special government inspectors of safety conditions were among the measures recommended by the Commission.

During the detailed discussion of welfare the seafarers' group urged the need to eliminate all idea of "charity" from the treatment of seamen in ports and claimed that provision should be made by governments with control in the hands of shipowners and seamen themselves. This principle was supported by the owners' group although it suggested that voluntary organisations should continue to have their place. Both groups emphasised the need for treating the seamen on shore as a citizen equal in every respect to all others in the community. Indian and Chinese seamen's representatives both urged improvement of conditions for their own nationalities in the ports of other countries and were sympathetically received.

British shipowners' and seafarers' representatives took the opportunity of expressing appreciation of the great efforts made by the United States Government and the American workers organisations to care for British seafarers in U.S.A.

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