

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF MERCHANT SHIPPING. By Nagendra Singh. British Shipping Law Series No. 8. [London: Stevens. 1963. xv + 1327 pp. 12 gns.]

The editors of the Library of British Shipping Laws are to be congratulated on having decided to include Dr. Nagendra Singh's *International Conventions of Merchant Shipping* in their series.

Too often, the works on municipal maritime law tend to ignore the fact that the masters of merchant ships and the lawyers who deal with their problems need to know more than merely appears in the statute books of their national legislatures. At the same time, works on international maritime law have a tendency to reduce the significance of conventions relating to merchant shipping and the household regime of the vessel to a comparatively small portion of their text. In fact, neither municipal nor international lawyers can safely afford to ignore the mass of documentary material arising from international agreements in this field.

Dr. Nagendra Singh's compilation is divided into five divisions. The first, devoted to technical and operational conventions, covers navigation, safety, submarine cables and telecommunications, tonnage measurement and sanitary regulations. From navigation, he turns to the navigators, and under the rubric of employment, welfare and status of seamen he lists no fewer than forty-eight conventions and recommendations of the I.L.O., as well as the Brussels Convention on the Treatment of Venereal Diseases of Seamen and the Hague Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen.

Maritime activities are in their very essence international in character and chaos would result if there were no attempt at international co-ordination. In Part Three, Dr. Singh deals with the substantial issues involved in the unification of private maritime law, covering the liability of shipowners — including the 1962 convention, at the date of printing still unratified by a single State, relating to liability for nuclear ships; maritime contracts and general average; salvage; the jurisdiction of the coastal state, and jurisdiction in matters of collision.

It is quite usual to find in works on international maritime law the type of material that appears in Part Four, but it is most convenient to have it in the same volume as the other material collected by Dr. Singh. Here are to be found the

Geneva Conventions of 1958 on the territorial sea and contiguous zone and on the high seas, together with the convention for the prevention of pollution by oil. In addition, this section deals with straits, both the Magellan and the Dardanelles, and with canals — while the learned editor brings the story of Suez up to 1957, he gives no indication of the position of the Kiel Canal since 1945. This part of the volume concludes with the conventions of 1921 and 1923 on land-locked states, ports freedom of transit and navigable waterways. A cross-reference to Article 3 of the Convention on the High Seas might have been helpful.

The work closes by reproducing the relevant documents concerning international organisations dealing with merchant shipping. Dr. Singh has reproduced not only the constitution of IMCO — the explanatory note, unfortunately, makes no reference to the World Court's advisory opinion of 1960 on this Constitution — but also materials on such non-governmental organisations as the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Union of Marine Insurance and the Comité Maritime International. In addition, there is a short note on the system of Shipping Conferences which will be dealt with in detail in a future volume on 'shipowners'.

Not only has Dr. Nagendra Singh performed a valiant task of compilation and consolidation, he has also provided useful notes explaining the significance and purpose of most of the conventions reproduced and has indicated the present state of ratification. While the publishers have served him well by producing a handsome volume, it is unfortunate that they have found it necessary to fix the price so high.

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