

Enclosures.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 16th January, 1886.

I am directed by the Postmaster-General to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the enclosed copy of a circular, No. 341, of the International Telegraph Office at Berne, dated the 13th November last, on the question of granting exemption from the payment of light and harbour dues for vessels engaged in cable-laying operations.

It is the case, as the circular states, that this question was brought before the International Telegraph Conference held at Berlin in August last, by Mr. John Pender, and that the Conference decided that it was not one which it came within its province to discuss; but the suggestion was made that the delegates of each State should bring the matter before their respective Governments, as it seemed to be one which should be regulated by legislation in each particular country.

It will be seen that, at the instigation of the German Administration of Posts and Telegraphs, the matter is now brought forward by the International Telegraph Office.

I am to state, for the information of Colonel Stanley, that the Board of Trade, being the department in this country to consider the question so far as it relates to the ports of the United Kingdom, have been communicated with, and I am to enclose a copy of the letter (and its enclosures) addressed to that department on the 23rd ultimo, together with a copy of the reply received from the Board, dated the 30th ultimo, from which it will be seen that they remain of the same opinion on the point as when they wrote to Mr. Pender on the 30th December, 1881, the letter published in Parliamentary Paper No. 300, of session 1882, of which a copy is also enclosed.

It appears, therefore, that, so far as the jurisdiction of the Board of Trade extends, the Board are not disposed to take any action in the matter; but the question remains whether, as regards those British colonies on the shores of which submarine telegraph cables are landed, Colonel Stanley will be prepared to obtain the views of the respective Colonial Governments on the subject, or whether, having regard to the opinion of the Board of Trade, he would be indisposed to take any action in the matter; and I am to ask you to be so good as to obtain his decision.

I am to request that the enclosed parliamentary paper may be returned to this department.

I have, &c.,

C. H. B. PATEY.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

MONSIEUR LE DIRECTEUR-GÉNÉRAL,—

Berne, le 13 Novembre, 1885.

Le Conférence Télégraphique Internationale de Berlin, qui, dans sa séance du 22 Août dernier, avait été saisie d'une proposition de M. John Pender, en vue d'obtenir la franchise des droits de port pour les navires chargés de la pose et de l'entretien des câbles sous-marins, a pensé que l'examen de cette question n'était pas de sa compétence.

Toutefois, sur la demande du Président, S.E. M. le Secrétaire d'État de Stephan, la Conférence a décidé que chaque délégation saisisait son Gouvernement de la proposition de M. Pender dont la solution a semblé être du ressort de la législation intérieure de chaque pays.

L'Administration des Postes et Télégraphes de l'Empire Allemand nous informe qu'en raison de l'intérêt considérable qui s'attache au fonctionnement régulier des conducteurs sous-marins, à leur entretien et au prompt rétablissement des dérangements auxquels ils sont exposés, et dans le but d'accorder aux entreprises de câbles toutes les facilités possibles, elle vient de porter la proposition de M. Pender à la connaissance du Département Impérial de l'Intérieur, en le priant de soumettre la question à un examen détaillé, et de provoquer les mesures qui lui paraîtraient appropriées à la circonstance.

Dans sa pensée, la question est d'une importance si grande pour les communications télégraphiques internationales, qu'elle s'impose à l'attention des administrations télégraphiques en vue d'une intervention analogue auprès de leurs Gouvernements respectifs.

Pour me conformer au désir exprimé par l'Administration Allemande, j'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre ces renseignements, en vous priant de vouloir bien vous reporter à ce sujet au procès-verbal de la 3^e séance (page 2), et de me faire connaître, si vous n'y voyez pas d'inconvénient, les suites que cette affaire aura reçues.

Veuillez agréer, &c.,

L. CURCHOD,

Le Directeur.

M. le Directeur-Général des Télégraphes.

SIR,—

General Post Office, 23rd December, 1885.

I am directed by the Postmaster-General to ask you to be good enough to bring before the Board of Trade the circular, No. 341, of the 13th ultimo, from the International Telegraph Office at Berne, of which a copy is enclosed, upon the question of obtaining exemption from payment of light and harbour dues for ships engaged in submarine cable operations.

As stated in the circular, the question was brought before the International Telegraphic Conference recently held in Berlin, but it was decided that it was not one that came within the competence of the Conference to discuss.

Lord John Manners desires me to ask you to be good enough to remind the Board that, whilst the arrangements for holding the Paris Conference for the protection of submarine cables were in progress, a letter, dated the 12th December, 1881, was addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the cable companies, setting forth the points which the companies thought deserved consideration; and I am to enclose an extract from that letter relating to the point now in question.

I am also to enclose an extract from a letter addressed to the Foreign Office by this department on the 5th October, 1882, stating the views of the Postmaster-General upon this question; and I am to ask that, as the question raised in the enclosed circular, of each Government deciding separately whether cable ships should be exempted from light and harbour dues, so far as its own