

jurisdiction extends, is one in the case of this country for the consideration of the Board, Lord John Manners may be informed what answer should be given to the circular addressed to him by the International Telegraph Office.

I may add that his Lordship will await the answer of the Board before communicating with the Colonial Office as regards British colonies.

The Secretary of the Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,

EXTRACT from letter from cable companies to Foreign Office, dated 12th December, 1881.—
“ The companies also would venture to ask that it might be made a recommendation to Governments to admit cable-repairing steamers to some kind of exemption from ordinary Customhouse regulations, light and harbour dues. These ships do not carry any kind of mercantile commodities or produce. They are solely engaged in maintaining submarine lines of international communication. They have frequently to enter harbour for shelter, and for the purpose of readjusting their stock of cable and refitting their lost cable, gear, and stores. On a recent occasion, when a steamer was obliged to enter a harbour in Spain to obtain from another ship a fresh supply of cable, permission to transfer the cable was absolutely refused, so that either the ship had to return to Lisbon, her last clearance port, for fresh papers, or both ships had to put to sea outside Customhouse jurisdiction, to enable them to transfer the cable, which they did. These circumstances delayed repairs for several days to a most important line of communication.”

EXTRACT from letter to Foreign Office of the 5th October, 1882, in papers 62,028/82 as to protection of submarine cables.—“ Mr. Fawcett does not see how this country could press for any relaxation of the Customs regulations of other States. There can be no doubt that any relaxation would tend to encourage smuggling; and the only concession which he would feel justified in suggesting is, that a cable should be allowed to be transferred from one ship to another, in harbour, duty-free. Probably, however, this is already allowed in most countries. Mr. Fawcett does not consider that this department could press for any special privileges in respect of light and harbour dues. It seems to him that, if a ship makes use of a harbour, it ought to pay proper light and harbour dues, no matter how often it may enter and re-enter the harbour in a given time. It is not, however, a matter which concerns the Post Office very much, and therefore, if other countries were disposed to make any concession, he does not think that the British delegates need make any opposition.”

Board of Trade (Harbour Department), Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,
30th December, 1885.

SIR,—

I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, No. 294,052, in which you transmit copy of a circular, dated the 13th ultimo, from the International Telegraph Office at Berne, upon the question of obtaining exemption from payment of light and harbour dues for ships engaged in submarine telegraph cable operations.

With reference to your invitation of the views of this department as to the answer to be given to the circular of the International Telegraph Office, I am to request that you will state to the Postmaster-General that the Board of Trade remain of the same opinion on the point in question as is expressed in their letter to Mr. Pender of the 30th December, 1881, published in Parliamentary Paper No. 300, of session 1882.

Copy of that paper, to the concluding portion of page 9 of which I am accordingly to direct your attention, is herewith enclosed, for convenience of reference.

The Secretary, General Post Office.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 23rd January, 1886.

I am directed by Colonel Stanley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, No. 294,052/85, enclosing a copy of a circular of the International Telegraph Office at Berne, on the question of granting exemption from the payment of light and harbour dues for vessels engaged in cable-laying operations.

2. In reply, I am to request that you will state to the Postmaster-General that Colonel Stanley is unable to recommend to the Colonial Governments a proposal which Her Majesty's Government for good reasons has declined to entertain.

3. The parliamentary paper enclosed in your letter is herewith returned.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office.

R. H. MEADE.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 30th January, 1886.

Referring to my letter of the 16th instant, No. 294,052/85, and to your reply of the 23rd instant, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that it has now been notified to the International Telegraph Office at Berne that the Government of this country is not disposed to take any action with a view to granting to cable ships exemption from light and harbour dues as far as regards the United Kingdom and British colonies.

Lord John Manners, however, directs me to observe that, as the Colonies of South Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, New South Wales, New Zealand, Tasmania, and Victoria adhere to the International Telegraph Convention, copies of the Circular No. 341, of which a copy was enclosed in my letter, will no doubt be sent to them from Berne; and I am to suggest, therefore, that Colonel Stanley may think it desirable that a communication should be addressed to them, in view of any local action they might otherwise take with the view of granting exemption from light and harbour dues to cable ships.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

C. H. B. PATEY.