

I request that, in communicating these letters to your Government, you will state that I trust that they will recognise the desire of Her Majesty's Government to meet their wishes in a matter the importance of which is fully recognised.

I have, &c.,
RIPON.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Glasgow, G.C.M.G., &c.

Enclosure No. 1.

SIR,—

Admiralty, 5th January, 1893.

With reference to your letter of the 19th ultimo, forwarding copy of a despatch from the Governor of South Australia, and of its enclosure, respecting the infrequency of the visits of Her Majesty's ships to the ports of this colony, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request that you will inform the Secretary of State that, before replying to Lord Kintore's communication of the 22nd October last, they propose to refer the question to Lord Charles Scott, who is shortly expected in this country. In the meanwhile, however, I am to transmit, for the information of the Marquis of Ripon, a copy of a letter from that officer, dated 31st October (No. 505), respecting the visits of Her Majesty's ships to Australian ports generally.

I am, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

R. D. AWDRY.

Sub-enclosure.

VISITS OF HER MAJESTY'S SHIPS TO AUSTRALIAN PORTS.

SIR,—

"Mildura," at Sydney, 31st October, 1893.

His Excellency the Governor of South Australia has sent to me privately a copy of a despatch, dated 22nd October, which he has sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, covering a communication from Sir John Downer, K.C.M.G., the Premier of South Australia, on the subject of the visits of Her Majesty's ships to the ports of that colony.

2. As this is a matter which will probably be referred to their Lordships after I have been relieved in this command, and when it might not be so convenient for me to furnish a report on the subject, owing to my not having any papers at hand for reference, I think it desirable to make the following remarks, so as to place their Lordships in possession of the facts of the case.

3. I enclose lists showing the visits which have been made by Her Majesty's ships to South Australian ports since the arrival of the new ships on this station. This will be found to differ from the account given by Sir John Downer, as the dates and number of ships he quotes are incorrect. He has also omitted any reference to the visits of the "Orlando" and "Cordelia." Summarised, nine different ships have visited South Australian ports for 141 days during the past twelve months, equalling the stay of one ship for between four and five months. I enclose lists also showing the visits paid during that period to ports in West Australia, Victoria, and Queensland.

4. Sir John Downer appears to make it a point that one of the new vessels should be permanently stationed in South Australian waters; but, although he took a leading part at the Colonial Conference in advocating the establishment of the squadron, he has apparently now overlooked the fact that "The Imperial Defence Act, 1888," provides for only four of these vessels being kept in commission. If, therefore, one of them is permanently stationed in South Australian waters, how are similar requests from five other contributing colonies (omitting New South Wales, where the other ships are kept in reserve) to be complied with?

5. I think Sir John Downer has also overlooked that portion of the agreement which provides, in Article 4, first schedule, that these vessels should be employed within the limits of the station, in the same way as are Her Majesty's ships of war.

It would be manifestly unfair to the crews of the other ships on this station, and also injurious to their health, if they are to be permanently employed in the hard work among the islands, while the four ships kept in commission under the agreement are always lying in Australian ports.

6. I may here remark that the Federal Council of Australasia has always taken great interest in the islands, which they look upon quite in the light of an Australian question.

7. As regards Lord Kintore's remark that a growing dissatisfaction exists in regard to this subject in the Colonies of Queensland and Victoria, I have certainly heard from the Governors that those colonies would like to see more of the ships, and I have met their representations as far as has been in my power. I believe the Queensland Government, at least, is satisfied, as in farewell letters from the Governor and Premier of that colony they have both thanked me for all I have done, and the Premier goes so far as to say that the Government "wish to express their appreciation of my constant desire to give effect to any reasonable requests relating to matters under my control."

I have, &c.,

C. T. SCOTT,

The Secretary to the Admiralty.

Rear-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.