

No. 38.

New Zealand, Dominions No. 680.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 25th August, 1919.

A.-1, 1919,
No. 29.

With reference to my predecessor's despatch, Dominions No. 700, of the 6th December, 1918, I have the honour to transmit to Your Excellency, for the information of your Ministers, the accompanying copies of a circular which has been issued to shipowners and masters of the British mercantile marine, embodying an order made by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with a view to protecting British merchant ships from damage by mine when navigating in certain areas.

I have, &c.,

MILNER.

Governor-General His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Liverpool,
P.C., G.C.M.G., G.B.E., M.V.O., &c

Enclosure.

CIRCULAR TO SHIPOWNERS AND MASTERS OF THE BRITISH MERCANTILE MARINE.

The following order has been issued by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty under the Defence of the Realm Regulations:—

ADMIRALTY ORDER.

In exercise of the powers conferred upon them by the Defence of the Realm Regulations and all other powers thereunto enabling them, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty hereby make the following order with a view to protecting British merchant vessels, when navigating within certain areas, from the risk of damage by mine:—

*Part I.—Use of Mine Protection Gear.*A. *Passenger-vessels*:—

1. British passenger-vessels equipped with the Otter protection gear are to stream their otters on all occasions in the following waters:—

(a.) Baltic Sea, east of the meridian of Cape Arkona (long. 13° 28' E.).

(b.) Mediterranean—

(i.) Ægean Sea: North and east of a line Thaso-Lemnos-Tenedos extended both ends to meet the nearest point on the mainland.

(ii.) Adriatic: North of parallel of latitude 40° 10' N.

(c.) Black Sea: In depths of less than 180 fathoms.

2. Otters are to be streamed by British passenger-vessels if uncertain of position (*i.e.*, in doubt as to being in approved tracks, channels, and fairways) in an area in the North Sea—Bounded on the west by the meridian of long. 40° E.; bounded on the north by parallel of lat. 56° 30' N.; bounded on the east by land; bounded on the south by land.

3. In all other waters otters are not required to be used by British passenger-vessels, provided that the approved tracks, channels, and fairways are adhered to.

B. *Other Vessels*:—

4. British merchant vessels, other than passenger-vessels, equipped with Otter gear are to stream their Otter gear on all occasions in—

(a.) The Baltic Sea, east of Cape Arkona (long. 13° 28' E.):

(b.) The Black Sea, in depths of less than 180 fathoms.

5. Otter gear is not required to be streamed by these vessels in any other waters, but it is of the greatest importance that the approved tracks, channels, and fairways shall be followed upon all occasions.

C. *All Vessels*:—

6. Senior Naval officers at ports from which ships are sailing may modify or add to these orders as demanded by local conditions.

7. To secure the efficient working of the Otter gear it must be properly adjusted, actually running, and adequately manned.

The master or other person in command or charge of any British vessel who neglects to see that the apparatus is so adjusted, running, manned, and worked as required by this order will be guilty of a summary offence against the Defence of the Realm Regulations.

Entry is to be made in the ship's log regarding the streaming and taking-inboard of otters.

8. Masters of vessels carrying deck cargo are to ensure that sufficient space to enable otters to be handled efficiently is always left when loading.

9. Application must be made in respect of all vessels proceeding to the Baltic to have Otter gear fitted, if it is not already installed.

10. The Admiralty order dated 9th May, 1919, and published in the *London Gazette* of 13th May, 1919, is hereby cancelled.

Given under our hands, this 28th day of July, 1919.

J. A. FERGUSON.

A. E. M. CHATFIELD.

Admiralty, S.W. 1.

Part II.—Special Masthead Lookouts.

11. The special masthead lookouts ordered to be carried and employed in ships of 2,500 gross tonnage and upwards, under Admiralty order of the 16th November, 1917, are still to be employed in the areas mentioned in paragraph 1 hereof, and in the entire Black Sea, and, in addition, in the English Channel to the eastward of the meridian of Greenwich, and in the entire area of the North Sea to the southward of latitude 62° N., and east of the meridian of Cape