

short statement of the existing Imperial law on the subject and the Board of Trade regulations [not reprinted], and remark, in conclusion, that the general question of the loss of life at sea has recently been the subject of a long and careful inquiry by a Royal Commission, which, however, has not presented its report.

Colonial Office, March, 1887.

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APPENDIX.

*Boats and Life-saving Appliances in Sea-going Ships.*

SECTION 292 and Table S of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854," prescribe the number of boats and life-buoys to be carried by all sea-going ships other than those which clear as emigrant ships under "The Passengers Act, 1855." Section 293 of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854," requires the boats and buoys to be kept always fit and ready for use. Section 15 of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1873," empowers the Board of Trade to reduce or vary the usual requirements in the case of vessels carrying only a limited number of passengers, and to allow rafts to be substituted, subject to certain conditions. Section 27 of "The Passengers Act, 1855," prescribes the number of boats to be carried by vessels clearing as emigrant ships. The regulations laid down by the Board of Trade respecting the boats and life-buoys to be carried by passenger steamships are contained in paragraphs 23 to 33 of the attached Instructions to Surveyors [not reprinted], and those respecting the boats of vessels clearing under the Passengers Act in paragraph 34 of the same Instructions. Under section 6 of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1876," the Board of Trade and its officers have power to order the provisional detention for survey of any ship which they have reason to believe is (on account of defective equipments or other specified cause) unfit to proceed to sea without serious danger to human life. Section 4 of the same Act provides that the taking or sending to sea of an unsafe British ship shall be deemed to be a misdemeanour under certain circumstances.

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No. 18.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 16th June, 1887.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for communication to your Government, a copy of a letter from the War Office respecting the proposal that the Australian military forces should be occasionally inspected by an Imperial general officer.

I have, &c.,

H. T. HOLLAND.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.

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Enclosure.

SIR,—

War Office, 6th June, 1887.

A proposal having been made at the Colonial Conference that an Imperial general officer should be sent to inspect occasionally the Australian forces, I am directed by the Secretary of State for War to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that it will be a source of gratification to Mr. Secretary Stanhope to be able to comply with this request, which was so unanimously supported by the colonial representatives at the recent Conference. I have to add that His Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief entirely concurs in this proposal, and will be prepared, whenever it may be considered expedient, to nominate a general officer to perform this duty.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

RALPH THOMPSON.

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No. 19.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 24th June, 1887.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for communication to your Government, a copy of a letter from the Foreign Office, enclosing a copy of despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Noumea, relating to the treatment of distressed British subjects in the hospitals in New Caledonia.

With a view to the further discussion of this question with the French Government, I should be glad to be informed as to the terms on which distressed French subjects are admitted into the hospitals in the colony under your Government.

I have, &c.,

H. T. HOLLAND.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.

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Enclosure.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 10th June, 1887.

I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to transmit to you, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a copy of a despatch which has been received by this depart-