

“The Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869,” which are of equal value to those issued by this department, have applied for permission to be examined for Board of Trade certificates of the same grade, and that their applications have been granted on the condition that they deliver up their colonial certificates of equal value.

In a recent case, the holder of a Bombay master's certificate granted under the Order in Council having passed the examination for a Board of Trade certificate of the same grade, the candidate, on receiving the new certificate, requested to have the Bombay certificate returned to him, as it was obtained some time ago, and bore an earlier date than the Board of Trade certificate. The Board of Trade have refused to comply with his request; and, on reviewing the whole question, have come to the conclusion that it is not desirable to continue the practice of allowing owners of colonial certificates to be examined for Board of Trade certificates of the same value, as it has the tendency to create a distinction as to the comparative value of Board of Trade and colonial certificates, which are declared by law to be of equal value.

I am to add that the condition under which such examinations have been hitherto permitted by this Board does not, as shown in the case just quoted, give general satisfaction, whereas to depart from it, and to allow an officer in the mercantile marine to possess more than one certificate of the same legal value, appears objectionable. Certificates which are of no practical value to the holder, and may therefore be mislaid or lost without being missed, are specially liable to get into other hands, and to be used by persons not entitled to them. For this reason the Board have always required certificates of a lower grade to be delivered up on the grant of a certificate of a higher grade, which will entitle the holder to serve in the capacity for which the certificates surrendered are available; and the principle applies quite as strongly when the certificates in question are for the same grade.

I am therefore to suggest, for the consideration of Lord Knutsford, that this decision should be communicated to the Colonial Governments which at present grant certificates under Order in Council (Victoria, Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales, Malta, South Australia, Tasmania, Newfoundland, Queensland, Hongkong, Straits Settlements), and that they should be requested to refuse applications from holders of certificates granted by the Government of any other British possession, or by the Board of Trade, to be examined for certificates of the same legal value. The above remarks apply only to Board of Trade certificates and certificates granted under “The Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869.”

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

GEORGE J. SWANSTON.

No. 32.

(New Zealand, No. 30.)

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 28th September, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 37, A.-1, 1890, No. 12 of the 26th June last, enclosing a protest and petition addressed to the Queen by Messrs. Donald and Edenborough, of Auckland, relating to the action of the German authorities in Samoa in connection with the steamer “Richmond.”

The petitioners pray that the matter of their claim should be referred to arbitration to be holden at Auckland, and that two arbitrators should be appointed, one by the Governor of New Zealand and the other by the Emperor of Germany, or by his Consul-General at Sydney, and that such two arbitrators should choose an umpire before proceeding with the reference; and, further, that the Queen will be pleased to direct that this proposal on their part should be submitted to His Imperial Majesty for his consideration, the petitioners undertaking to accept and be bound by any award and decision of such arbitrators, and to execute any instrument which his Imperial Majesty may require for the purpose of evidencing their entire assent to accept the determination of such arbitrators.

I have been in communication with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs upon the matter of this petition, and I transmit to you herewith copies of two despatches which have been received through the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin on the subject of the proposed arbitration in the case. You will be so good as to communicate these papers to the petitioners, and to draw their attention to the course which the German Government recommend should be taken, as explained in Count Berchem's note to Mr. Beauclerk of the 4th September. You will inform the petitioners at the same time that their petition has been laid before the Queen, who was pleased to receive it very graciously.

I have, &c.,

KNUTSFORD.

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