

No. 9.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 23rd June, 1896.

I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of a letter from the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom forwarding a resolution, passed at its last annual meeting, complaining of colonial laws affecting British shipping being more stringent than the Imperial Act.

I have caused the Chamber to be informed, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government have not the power to impose such restrictions upon colonial legislation as the Chamber would desire; but I would invite your Ministers to consider the expediency of preserving uniformity as far as possible in legislation affecting merchant shipping throughout the Empire.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.

Enclosure.

Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, 1, Whittington Avenue,
Leadenhall Street, E.C., 5th June, 1896.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that at the last annual meeting of this Chamber the following resolution upon the subject of legislation affecting British merchant shipping in British possessions was unanimously passed:—

"That representations be made to Her Majesty's Government urging that no Legislature of any British colony or dependency should be allowed to impose upon British shipping (other than shipping registered in such colony or dependency) any further burdens and restrictions than those imposed by Imperial legislation."

In forwarding to you the above resolution, I am desired to earnestly press upon you the fact that under "The Merchant Shipping (Consolidation) Act, 1894," a statute which comprises no fewer than 748 sections and 22 schedules, British shipowners are subjected to a code of parliamentary requirements of the most onerous character.

Notwithstanding this fact, however, the colonial Legislatures are at intervals passing local Acts of their own which impose additional requirements upon British vessels trading to those possessions and dependencies. For example, the New Zealand Legislature have recently passed a Bill imposing a fixed "manning scale" upon vessels, and the New South Wales Government have recently passed an extraordinary Act dealing with income-tax which affects British shipowners whose vessels trade to the colony.

My council would earnestly beg that you would impress upon the colonial Legislatures the importance of their not going beyond the provisions of the British "Merchant Shipping (Consolidation) Act, 1894," in their requirements.

My council desire me to express to you the view which they strongly entertain—viz., that when British vessels have once complied with the elaborate code of parliamentary regulations contained in "The Merchant Shipping (Consolidation) Act, 1894," they should be exempt from further legislative interference by the colonial Governments.

By direction of the council, I am addressing a somewhat similar communication to this to the Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. J. Chamberlain, M.P.,

W. H. COOKE, Secretary.

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, &c.

No. 10.

(No. 33.)

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 6th July, 1896.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for communication to your Ministers, with reference to your despatch, No. 11, of the 19th March, the accompanying copy of a further letter from the Wallsall and District Incorporated Chamber of Commerce respecting the tax levied in New Zealand on agents doing business for a principal not resident in the colony.

I have, &c.,

JOHN BRAMSTON,

For the Secretary of State.

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