

No. 80.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

7th April, 1902.

SIR,—

I beg to transmit herewith copy of letter and enclosure received from the Pacific Cable Board, raising the question whether the Governments interested in the cable will incur the charge of insuring the Board's repairing-vessel, or whether they will prefer to take the risk which the absence of such insurance would involve; and in reference thereto I shall be glad if the Government will convey to me their wishes by cable.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure in No. 80.

The SECRETARY, Pacific Cable Board, to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Pacific Cable Board, 24, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W., 4th April, 1902.

I enclose copy of the Board's correspondence with His Majesty's Treasury on the question of proposed insurance of the cable-repairing vessel, now in course of construction, and, in pursuance of the resolution passed at the last Board meeting, am to ask you to be kind enough to communicate with your Government with a view to learning their policy in this matter.

I am, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

HUGH LATHAM, Secretary.

Sub-enclosure 1 to Enclosure in No. 80.

The SECRETARY, Pacific Cable Board, to the SECRETARY, Imperial Treasury,

SIR,—

Pacific Cable Board, 24, Queen Anne's Gate, S.W., 5th March, 1902.

I am instructed to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners to His Majesty's Treasury, that in preparing the detailed estimates of the annual cost of their repairing-vessel the Board learn that the rate of insurance payable in respect of the vessel will amount to not less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of her value—i.e., the contract price, amounting to £63,900, together with a further sum amounting to, say, £16,100 for cable-machinery and instruments—representing an annual expenditure of some £3,500 to £4,000 per annum.

The Board think it a matter for consideration of His Majesty's Government, and other Governments interested in the Pacific Cable, whether they will incur this heavy charge for insurance, or whether they will prefer to take the risk which the absence of such insurance would involve.

The matter is of more importance, because in any case the Board assumes that they should annually set aside a sum to write down the capital value of the vessel, and this policy as the cost of insurance is added to it will involve a very heavy charge.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, His Majesty's Treasury.

HUGH LATHAM, Secretary.

Sub-enclosure 2 to Enclosure in No. 80.

The SECRETARY, Imperial Treasury, to the CHAIRMAN, Pacific Cable Board.

SIR,—

Treasury Chambers, 22nd March, 1902.

In reply to Mr. Latham's letter of the 5th instant, I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to say that it is not the practice for the Government to insure its own vessels or any property which it may send by sea.

Unless, therefore, the other Governments concerned should desire that the repairing-vessel of the Pacific Cable Board, and the machinery and instruments carried thereon, should be insured, My Lords do not think that it is necessary to do so.

I am, &c.,

The Chairman, Pacific Cable Board.

E. HAMILTON.

No. 81.

The Hon. the MINISTER of MARINE, Wellington, to the Hon. the ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH COMMISSIONER, Wellington.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 8th April, 1902.

With reference to your letter of the 27th ultimo [No. 66], addressed to the Commissioner of Trade and Customs, in which you ask that the "Anglia" and other cable-steamers connected with the Pacific cable may be exempted from light dues, &c., I have the honour to state that the law does not provide for the remission of dues on those steamers. In the case of light dues the Act only provides for the exemption of vessels belonging to His Majesty or to the Government of the colony; and, as regards harbour dues, which are revenue of Harbour Boards at ports where these bodies are constituted, the only exemptions are those provided for in section 133 of "The Harbours Act, 1878," which would not apply to the Pacific cable steamers.

I have, &c.,

WM. HALL-JONES.

The Hon. the Electric Telegraph Commissioner, Wellington.