

British interest; so that our application is brought strictly within the principle laid down; and as regards precedent, we have already had the honour of submitting to you a list of 11 ocean steam ship companies to which Royal charters have been granted—to some of them very recently—none of which have offered to promote objects of greater national importance than those projected by this company, and several of them comparatively insignificant in the extent of capital and size of ships, and one of them having authority by charter to trade with all parts of the world, without any regard to the chartered or private companies or individuals previously engaged in various branches of trade with steam vessels.

It is, however, supposed that you have been influenced in rejecting our application by an opinion that it is not advisable to grant any charters until a commission, about to be appointed, shall have reported on the general question of limited liability. If this supposition be well founded, we respectfully request your attention to the special reasons why such a rule should not be applied to our case. We have been sniters at the Board of Trade from the 30th September last, without an intimation having been made to us until the 26th February, that any objection existed to the grant of the charter we prayed for, except from the opposition of the parties already referred to, which was as well known, and the value of which could be as well estimated, in October or December as in February. During the interval of suspense, extending over five months, we have necessarily incurred expenses amounting to a very large sum of money, and have also sacrificed time, of still greater value to us as men of business; and we cannot think that Her Majesty's Government will consider it just that such sacrifices should be imposed upon any of her subjects, by the application to their case of a principle that was not adopted until many months after the time at which a decision on their application might have been arrived at.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Thos. H. Brooking,*  
Chairman of the Provisional Committee.

The Right Honourable  
Edward Cardwell, M.P., &c. &c.

— No. 64. —

Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,  
Whitehall, 16 March 1853.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, on behalf of the provisional committee of the London, Liverpool, and North American Screw Steam Ship Company, in which you request to be allowed to restate the facts of the case as to the application by the above company for a Royal charter of incorporation, under the impression that they must have been misunderstood.

In reply, I am to state to you that my Lords have carefully considered the statements contained in your letter, and are unable to arrive at any other conclusion than that already conveyed to you. Their Lordships decided upon your case after a most careful consideration of all the circumstances, and with reference to former precedents. They are not aware of any instance in which a charter has been conferred by the Crown where so large an amount of private enterprise was already engaged, and so general an objection was expressed, on the part of the persons interested, to the possession by a company of privileges which the general operation of the law denied to them.

In reply to your statement, that the company were prepared to accept a charter for the North American colonies only, I am directed to refer you to the letter of your solicitors of the 4th December, in which it is stated that the objects of the company would be defeated by such a limitation; and detailed reasons are given for that statement.

I am, &c.

(signed) *James Booth.*

T. H. Brooking, Esq.