

Answer.—The duty is imposed on vessels of the United States arriving with articles the produce of the United States. Vessels in ballast are therefore, not liable to the duty. Vessels having passengers and their baggage only, are here (in England) deemed to be in ballast. The practice in the West Indies, is not known here; neither can any instance be traced of a vessel not having any cargo: therefore if such passenger vessels are employed, it is probable that they are considered as laden.

SPAIN.

The Spanish Cabinet is said to have been unusually active, in consequence of despatches from England and Russia. A letter from Madrid, of the 17th of February states, "that Gen. Alex had gone to St. Petersburg, to demand the execution of a secret treaty between the Court of Madrid and that of Russia, by which the latter has pledged itself to furnish to Spain a squadron and 12,000 men to aid that country in regaining her American possessions, in the event of England, by openly recognizing the independence of the new American States, should render it impossible for Spain to reconquer them by her own forces. Russia it is added, is to be indemnified for the expenses by the cession of the Balearic Islands, according to some; of the Californias, according to others."

Madrid, February 24.—The Ministers of Grace and Justices sent on the 15th inst. to the Council of State for their respective opinions a project of an act of amnesty of which the following are the principal provisions:—

1. Amnesty is granted to all Spaniards, who by their political opinions rendered themselves guilty between March 1, 1820, and March 1, 1824.

2. All persons detained for political crimes or offences committed up to the latter period shall be set at liberty forth-with, and all proceedings commenced against them shall be annulled.

3. My Ministers secretaries of State, for propositions to public offices, shall in future discard all hindrances proceeding from political opinions, and in the choice of persons shall have respect solely to their virtues, their capacity, and the merit of which they have given proof in the administrative posts which they solicit.—As to those who have not yet served, their capacity and morality alone shall determine the choice of the Ministers of State.

4. It is forbidden to any one to include in the number of his titles services rendered during the revolution, or to mention his opinions, reserving to myself the cognizance of these, and the recompence of the former by other means than offices; having acquired the conviction that the contrary might turn to the prejudice of the state and perhaps even retard the moment so desired, of seeing tranquility revive in my states, and union and peace re-established among my subjects.

5. The persons who have absented themselves from the kingdom for political offences, shall be bound to return within the term of three months if they wish to enjoy the benefit which this amnesty affords them. In the contrary case, they shall be accounted to have renounced it, and shall remain subject to the laws now in force.

The report of the council at Castile upon the above project, was in substance as follows:—

"This decree is not only ill-timed, but even inexcutable; the documents which accompany the project (Copies of diplomatic notes,) evidently indicate misinformation relative to the actual state of the nation, and how little propriety there is in opening to certain men, access to public offices."