

— No. 62. —

Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade,
Whitehall, 5 March 1853.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, on the subject of the grant of a charter of incorporation, with limited liability, to a steam shipping company, limited to the carrying into effect your contract with the Canadian Government, I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to acquaint you that their Lordships adhere to the view conveyed to you in my letter of the 26th ult.

Robert Lamont, Esq.

I am, &c.
(signed) James Booth.

— No. 63. —

No. 11, Leadenhall-street,
10 March 1853.

Sir,

The provisional committee of the London, Liverpool, and North American Screw Steam Ship Company have had before them the letter addressed to their solicitors, Messrs. Wadson & Malleson, by Mr. Booth, on 26th ultimo, and feeling that their application for a Royal charter of incorporation has not been justly dealt with at the Board of Trade, they desire me respectfully to request your permission to restate the facts of the case, under the impression that they must have been misunderstood.

Our petition was presented, and referred to the Board of Trade, in the month of October last; we proposed to carry out objects of great national importance without any expense to the country, viz., to establish steam communication between London, Canada, and Newfoundland; between London and the United States of America; and between Liverpool, Canada, and Newfoundland, all which routes are at present without any such accommodation, and on which the running of steam vessels of any description has never been attempted; we also embraced the performance of a postal contract entered into by one of our members with the Government of Canada, which contract is a matter of peculiar interest with both the Government and people of that important colony; and, finally, we proposed to extend steam communication, by means of large screw vessels, between Liverpool and New York. We undertook to convey grants on all these great routes at low rates of passage, with all the comforts, safety, and regularity to be attained only by means of steam, and which have not hitherto been afforded to that class of passengers by any parties whatever. In order to accomplish these important designs, we engaged to build a fleet of large and powerful screw steam ships, the possession of which in the mercantile marine would be found the most efficient, and at the same time the least expensive means of contributing to the national defences, if ever the shores of this country should be threatened with invasion.

The high value which is put by other countries on the enrolment of such vessels on their mercantile marine, is proved by the following facts: In April last, the State of New York passed a law for the express purpose of encouraging the establishment of ocean steam ship companies, by which any seven or more citizens of the United States are empowered to form themselves into a corporation, with limited liability, by merely filing in a public office a list of their names, with a statement of the objects of the company, and its proposed capital. The French Government is understood to be at this moment in negotiation for the establishment of a powerful fleet of transatlantic steam ships, and to be willing to pay a large annual subsidy in furtherance of that object. And the Prussian Government has recently issued a decree remitting all duties on the importation of iron plates, and other articles to be employed in the construction of iron screw steam ships.

An opposition was offered to that part of our project which related to the trade between Liverpool and New York only; and that opposition was entirely got up by parties in the receipt of large annual grants from the Governments of England and the United States, who have hitherto been enabled to maintain a monopoly of steam between those ports by means of the subsidies they receive.

Your