

## NORTH AMERICAN SCREW STEAM SHIP COMPANY.

11

— No. 12. —

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Board of Trade.

The Memorial of the Shipowners' Association of the Port of Belfast.

Humbly sheweth,

THAT memorialists have to draw to the attention of your Lordships a notice which appeared in the "London Gazette" of the 22d October last past, signed by the solicitors for the London, Liverpool, and North American Screw Steam Ship Company, of which the following is a copy :—

" Notice is hereby given, that an application has been made by or on behalf of the London, Liverpool, and North American Screw Steam Ship Company (provisionally registered), formed for the purpose of conveying passengers, emigrants, specie, and merchandise in screw steam ships to and from the port of London, the port of Liverpool, and other port or ports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the ports of St. John's, Newfoundland, Quebec and Montreal, in Canada, and other ports of British North America, and the port of New York, and other ports of the United States of America, to grant such company a charter of incorporation, under the provisions of the Act of 1 Vict. c. 73, intituled, 'An Act for better enabling Her Majesty to confer certain Powers on Trading and other Companies,' and that such application has been referred by Her Majesty to the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Plantations.

" Dated this 21st day of October 1852.—Signed, Wadeson & Malleson, Solicitors for the London, Liverpool, and North American Steam Screw Ship Company, 11, Austin Friars, London."

Memorialists have also heard that another company, intending to trade to certain ports in the Mediterranean, have applied to your Lordships for a similar Royal charter, limiting the liability of the partners to the amount of stock subscribed by them.

That while this association must feel gratified with every undertaking which is likely to extend and enlarge the trade and commercial relations between Great Britain and other countries in the increase and employment of British shipping, whether screw steam ships or others, they cannot but view with consequences the most serious to their own interests as shipowners, and to the safety of the public, the application of the aforesaid companies to seek by Royal charter for indemnity against loss, beyond the amount of shares subscribed for and registered in the name of each proprietor or shareholder, under the provisions of the Act 1 Vict. c. 73.

That at no period of our commercial history were monopolies deemed other than unjust, where no new discovery warranted such a concession from the Government; that the protective system of trading in all its departments having been virtually abandoned, as well by the repeal of the navigation laws as by the free trade commercial policy which has been lately adopted by Her Majesty's Government, being in spirit and in practice altogether at variance with the exclusive rights now sought for by said companies, with no assignable or well-founded cause. That memorialists are largely interested as individual owners and partners in screw steamers and other ships engaged in these trades, without any protection whatever than the common law of the land affords, their liability for loss extending over all their property; that their capital thus employed would be fearfully jeopardised were any such undue privileges to be granted to the aforesaid companies.

That your memorialists cannot in terms sufficiently strong convey their ideas of the amount of injury that the grant of such charter would produce, while the solitary prospects of negative good would be speedily overwhelmed by the greater amount of positive evil to your memorialists, and all others connected with such property.