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Messrs Bird & Co's Application for Steamers for EA Service

1919

Dec

Person's Paper.

Does not recommend be supported as this would be on attack on Conference lines. Suggests that Gerts be asked to estimate tonnage required for next year & Conference be invited to make an offer to deal with whole.

5656

Mr. B. B. Bunting

I doubt whether in face of this we could support the proposals - but wait for D.O.F. reply? & promised

D.O.F. if no reply by Dec. 8?

all

W. G. B. 5.12.19

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sequent Paper.

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ALL COMMUNICATIONS
TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE
CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES,
THE ABOVE REFERENCE AND THE
DATE OF THIS LETTER BEING QUOTED.

TELEGRAMS: CROWN AGENTS
TELEPHONE: 7222 VICTORIA.

C O
63070

4. MILLBANK EC. 3
WESTMINSTER,
LONDON, S.W. 1.

3rd December, 1919.

Sir,

421

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th November, No. ^B85656/1919, with enclosures, respecting Messrs. Bird & Co's application for steamers for service in East Africa.

2. We cannot recommend that this Company's proposition in its present form should be supported. So far as we can ascertain they are not shipowners, nor do they control any tonnage. They ask to be supplied with Government tonnage to move cargo in which the Protectorate Governments are to a certain extent interested. If any tonnage is available, the Ministry of Shipping might be asked directly to supply steamers for the conveyance of the Sisal and other produce.

3. Assuming that the Ministry of Shipping gave Messrs. Bird & Co. the management of steamers they would have to be loaded outwards as well as homewards. This would be an attack on the Conference Lines, who would not submit to it without an effort.

4. The Conference Lines load steamers at Glasgow, Birkenhead, London and Middlesbrough, and when sufficient cargo is offered at other ports, such as Cardiff, they are prepared to send steamers for it. Up to the present they have carried all the cargo for the Protectorate Governments from the most convenient ports without undue delay. Our present arrangement with them is that we receive an abatement of 5% from the tariff rates of freight.

5. The demand for tonnage is very large in every direction, and with the control of the Ministry of Shipping, Steam Shipowners are not able to develop their services as they might wish. Also the cost of running steamers under existing circumstances is so great

Under Secretary of State,
COLONIAL OFFICE.

