

*Objection.*

to apply to concerting "an arrangement for conducting, under their own supervision, the packet service between Ceylon and Sydney;" but "these Delegates, instead of addressing themselves solely to the specific object which had been named, entered into a consideration of the general question of postal communication with the Mother Country."

*Answer.*

ties, some ground may exist for this objection. The words are to be found in the Treasury minute of the 4th September, 1866, upon the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 20th July, 1866, enclosed in a circular despatch of Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 22nd September, 1866. The words of the minute are these:—(After suggesting that an arrangement might possibly be made for the conveyance of the Australian mails from Galle by the vessels of the Messageries Imperiales.) "It now becomes necessary to consider in what manner the service between Point de Galle and the Australian Colonies is to be provided for, on the discontinuance of the present contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. My Lords would be glad if the Australian Colonies would themselves, in combination, undertake to provide this service, in which case they would, as at present, be prepared, on behalf of the Imperial Government, to defray one-half of the reasonable cost of such service; and they would suggest that the Secretary of State for the Colonies should communicate with the different Colonial Governments with the view to such an arrangement being carried out."

But the expressions used in the despatch of the Secretary of State, covering this minute, do not confine the question to the narrow view indicated in this objection. They are as follows:—

"I request that you will lay these papers before your responsible advisers, in order that they may make known their wishes and views on the several questions raised in their Lordships' minute, so far as they affect the arrangements to be made for the conduct and maintenance of the postal service between this country and the Australian Colonies."

That the more extended view of the subject was also entertained in the Colonies, is evident from the correspondence inviting the Conference, convened in compliance with the suggestion contained in this minute of the Lords of the Treasury.

In the despatch of the Chief Secretary of Victoria to the Government of New South Wales, of the 10th October, 1866, he says:—"Adverting to the correspondence which has taken place respecting steam postal communication by the Suez and Panama routes, this Government having attentively considered the subject, are most desirous that such arrangements should be entered into by the Colonies interested in the question, as will place the services on a permanent and equitable footing."

Upon the 26th November he again writes, with reference to the desire expressed in the Treasury minute that the Colonies should undertake the joint control of the contract, that this "appears to the Government of Victoria to afford an additional reason to those already urged," for "the full discussion of all matters connected with steam postal communication, in order that the whole question may be settled on equitable grounds for the common good."

Similar communications were addressed by him to the Governors of New Zealand, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia, in which he more explicitly states "that such a meeting should take place with the view to the whole question of steam postal communication with the United Kingdom being fully considered." In reply, the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, in a despatch on the 10th December, 1866, states,— "On the importance of maintaining the through