

Objection.

2nd. That "had their Lordships thought it likely that such a course would have been adopted, they would probably have deemed it proper to send out some person well acquainted with the facts of the case to act as their representative" (that is, as the representative of Great Britain); but as it was, there was no one at the meeting to represent British interests, as distinguished from those of the different Colonies, and British interests appear to a great extent to have been lost sight of.

3rd. That although "these resolutions, having been reported to the Governments of the different Colonies, *** appear to have received the sanction of the Executive of each Government," yet that "in the case of the very important Colony of Victoria," the "balance of legislative opinion is shown to be decidedly against the resolutions of the Delegates."

4th. That the request, as far as relates to the payment of a share of postal services *via* Panama and Torres Straits, is "but a repetition of what has already been refused;" and that "no new circumstances of importance have arisen since the questions relating to these two routes were settled," and that no reason exists "why the matter should be reopened." And His Grace further states—"It

Answer.

service, now that it has been successfully established, and the expediency of settling the whole question of ocean mail communication in equitable regard to the interests of all the Colonies, and on a basis that shall afford some prospect of satisfaction and permanence, this Government cordially concurs in your views as now communicated, and it reciprocates the desire you express for the promotion of friendly relations in all matters of inter-colonial interest * * * * For these reasons, it appears the more desirable that the whole group of British communities in this part of the world should be represented at any such Postal Conference as you suggest and invite, in order that the remoter as well as the more immediate advantages to be derived from each separate line of communication, both singly and forming a part of a system, may be considered thoroughly and from opposite stand-points."

Any attempt, therefore, to consider the question limited to the narrow view indicated by His Grace in this report, would have been utterly futile; as by this limitation the question is not open as to the conveyance of the mail from Galle, but is narrowed to its conveyance *via* King George's Sound—the objectionable feature in the scheme.

2nd. It is difficult to imagine in what manner British interests were disregarded in consequence of the absence of a British delegate at the proceedings of the Conference. His Grace does not point this out, and it must therefore be left to conjecture. An attentive perusal of the Memorial adopted by the Delegates will show that British interests occupied as large a share of their attention as Colonial ones; and indeed it scarcely admits of a doubt that any measure which would advance Colonial interests, and at the same time unite them more intimately with Great Britain, must produce a corresponding advantage to the latter.

3rd. The proceedings and resolutions of the Conference having been unanimously endorsed by the Legislatures of all the other Australian Colonies, it is matter of surprise that no importance whatever has been attached to their views; while the opinions entertained by "two-fifths of the Legislative Assembly and the whole of the Legislative Council of Victoria" are considered of sufficient weight to induce the Imperial Government to refuse the proposition of the United Colonies. The Victorian Government, which it is humbly conceived was the sole authority which should have possessed weight with Her Majesty's Government, faithfully discharged the obligations which they had undertaken in concert with the Governments of the other Colonies, and pressed the adoption of the resolutions of the Conference, even at the risk of a vote of want of confidence. His Grace considers that the question was only carried by its assuming a political aspect, and that the opinion of opposition would have been more manifest, had not the question been treated as one of confidence in the Ministers. Might it not also have been assumed that the opposition to the proposal of the Conference was itself a political move?

4th. The refusal of the Imperial Government to contribute a subsidy to the mail routes *via* Panama and Torres Straits, was made under very different circumstances. The former applications to the Imperial Government for assistance to these ocean mail routes were made by individual Colonies acting under the non-concurrence of the others. But even under these unfavourable circumstances,