

*Objection.*

is clear to my mind that the general interests, both of the Mother Country and of the Colonies, require that the services should be by the way of Suez and King George's Sound.

*Answer.*

the proposals for the establishment of one (if not of both) of these lines received the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government; and the Government of this Colony could not conceive that they were exceeding the bounds of their public duty by resubmitting the question to the Colonial Conference. For the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury informed Sir E. B. Lytton, on the 16th October, 1858, that "with regard to the question of establishing a second monthly service, and the advisability of adopting the Panama route as the alternative line, my Lords are carefully considering this question, in order to see how the wishes and interests of the Colonies may best be met." On the 15th November, 1858, my Lords again write—"In reference to the establishment of the second route *via* Panama, my Lords have observed with satisfaction that the subject is now engaging the attention of the Colonies, as their desire to see this line of communication opened up, in conformity with the intimation conveyed in the notice appended to the advertisement for the service *via* Suez continues unabated."

On the 19th April, 1859, by a Treasury minute of that date, their Lordships write—"Considering the vast importance to the Australian Colonies, especially to New South Wales and New Zealand, of a communication which, amongst other advantages, will afford them facilities of intercourse with the whole continent of America, from which they are at present comparatively excluded, and looking to the very liberal manner in which the Government of New South Wales have come forward in support of this scheme, my Lords are of opinion, that they ought no longer to delay fulfilling the intention which they formerly announced of inviting tenders for this service." Their Lordships annexed certain conditions, which were—1st, that the amount is reasonable (estimated at £160,000); 2nd, that the service should harmonize and alternate with the Suez service; and 3rd, that the Government of the Australian Colonies would undertake one entire half of the cost of both the services *via* Suez as well as *via* Panama, whatever that may be. These tenders appear to have been called for on the 20th May, 1859, and copies of the tenders sent in (six in number) were forwarded to this Government. Before these were decided upon, a change of Ministry took place; and the question, in common with the whole subject of ocean postal contracts, was referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. This was the position of a question, which His Grace designates as refused, and finally settled. But Her Majesty's Government subsequently, upon the route being established by the conjoint action of the Governments of New South Wales and New Zealand, agreed to carry the mails to Colon free of cost, as the contribution of the Imperial Government, an arrangement which is still in force. No request made by this Colony for the establishment of a second mail service *via* Torres Straits has been refused, the various minutes and despatches upon the subject having simply remained unanswered, with the single exception of a request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 14th October, 1864, to the Governor of New South Wales, that he would convey the thanks of Her Majesty's Government to Captain Van Rees, of the Dutch corvette "D'Jambé," for his valuable information on the subject.

Why His Grace should differ from the conclusions arrived at by previous Administrations, and why it is so "clear that the general interests both