

Extract of a Despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir E. Head, dated 27th November, 1858.

"You will see that his object in addressing me is to procure such testimony as may be sufficient to correct what he represents to be a prevalent impression in Canada as to complicity on his part in the insurrectionary movement to which he alludes in Australia.

"You are, therefore, authorized to assure Somerville, that he was not supposed by the Government to have had any improper participation in the alleged circumstances to which he now refers as having been brought under the notice of this department, and that they were only so brought through the medium of his own communications.

"You may also add, that, so far as I know, Somerville evinced a laudable desire to afford to my predecessor information which he (Somerville) believed to be of an important character.

"I have, &c.,

(Signed,)

"E. B. LYTTON.

One person, at least, who has seen that letter, finds in it such a meaning as this :

That at the Colonial Office the officials had not heard of any secret political societies in Australia, or of danger to British authority, until I made the communication ; and that they did not then believe that my information was founded on facts.

I may add to this view of the case my first impression ; namely, that, while they were pleased to say that they had perfect confidence that I believed what I told them, they doubted its existence on the ground that no agitation for Australian revolution had been heard of by them, and no motive seemed to exist for any such movement. It was not for me to state motives and sustain them by argument : I declined to do so. I did not even refer to the grievances about land, which are glanced at in this chapter. But for my own vindication, I produced collateral proofs of the very few allegations made to show that I at least had grounds for what I believed. To me individually it was immaterial whether they believed, in June 1858, all or nothing of what I felt it my duty, in conformity with the conservative instincts of my whole life, to communicate ; but at, or soon after, the 27th of November, when Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton wrote the despatch to the Governor General of Canada from which an extract was given me, he must have known that the *public* agitation for Australian "independence" was initiated on the 28th of August 1858 at Melbourne, and as quickly suppressed through the quiet operations of the Colonial Government there.

Soon after I received the letter in Quebec, a paragraph of Australian