

PART I.

Despatches from
the Secretary of
State.

Mr. HOLLAND to the UNDER SECRETARY, Foreign Office.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 27th September, 1872.

I am directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, enclosing a copy of a Despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, respecting the Navigator group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean.

With reference to the observations reported to have been made by Mr. Fish to Sir E. Thornton, upon the agreement made between the chief of the Island of Tutuila and Captain Meade, relative to the port of Pago-Pago, Lord Kimberley does not understand how, if the United States are to "have an exclusive right to that harbour as a naval station and a coaling depôt," this is not to "interfere with any other vessels which might frequent the port, nor with commercial transactions."

This statement seems to his Lordship to require some explanation.

The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office.

I have, &c.,

H. T. HOLLAND.

The Right Hon. E. HAMMOND to the UNDER SECRETARY, Colonial Office.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 20th September, 1872.

I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you, to be laid before the Earl of Kimberley, the accompanying copy of a Despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington in regard to the annexation of Samoa to the United States.

The Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

I have, &c.,

E. HAMMOND.

Sir E. THORNTON to Earl GRANVILLE.

MY LORD,—

Washington, 18th July, 1872.

On the receipt of your Lordship's Despatch No. 277, of the 22nd ultimo, I inquired of Mr. Hale, Acting Secretary of State, what was the decision of the United States Government with regard to a petition said to have been addressed to the President by the chiefs of Samoa, for the annexation of that island to the United States.

Mr. Hale replied that he was under the impression that no such petition had been received, and referred to an answer given some time ago to an inquiry made by the House of Representatives, in which Mr. Fish stated that no such request had been received. I suggested that it might have arrived since that time, and Mr. Hale promised to inquire into the matter.

On Mr. Fish's arrival here on the 15th instant, I made the same inquiry of him upon the subject, and after having looked into the papers, he this morning informed me that no document of the nature I described had reached the President.

He, however, told me that Captain Meade, of the United States steamer "Narragansett," had come to an arrangement with the chief of the Island of Tutuila relative to the port of Pago-Pago. Captain Meade had made this agreement without any previous instructions or powers; but on its arrival here, the President had deemed it expedient to transmit it to the Senate for its sanction. This body had, however, closed its session without having taken any action on this convention or agreement.

Mr. Fish said that he would have been glad to have shown me this document, but he had found upon inquiry that a copy of it had not been retained either at the State or Navy Department, and that the original, being now locked up in the Senate, was not accessible.

As far as he remembered, however, its principal stipulation was that the United States should have an exclusive right to the harbour of Pago-Pago as a naval station and a coaling depôt. This would not, however, interfere with any other vessels which might frequent the port, nor with commercial transactions. I alluded to a telegraphic report, published in to-day's newspapers, that Captain Meade had proclaimed the protectorate of the Island of Tutuila by the United States.

Mr. Fish, in reply, said that the Government had received no information of such an act, and that, if it had taken place, it had been done without any instructions.

I have the honor to enclose three printed copies of some documents relating to the Island of Tutuila, which were forwarded to the Navy Department by Captain Meade, and subsequently submitted to the House of Representatives.

They include some commercial regulations for the harbour of Pago-Pago, signed by the chief of Tutuila, which Captain Meade forwards "with his approval," and a somewhat grandiloquent address which he makes to the chiefs and people of that island.

The Right Hon. the Earl Granville, K.G.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD THORNTON.

The Right Hon. E. HAMMOND to the UNDER SECRETARY, Colonial Office.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 9th December, 1872.

With reference to your letter of the 27th of September last, I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you, to be laid before the Earl of Kimberley, a copy of a Despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, reporting a conversation with Mr. Fish respecting the establishment by the United States of a naval station at Pago-Pago.

The Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

I have, &c.,

E. HAMMOND.