

Sir E. THORNTON to Earl GRANVILLE.

PART I.

MY LORD,—

Washington, 18th November, 1872.

Despatches from
the Secretary of
State.

On the receipt of your Lordship's Despatch No. 378, of the 30th ultimo, I again referred, in conversation with Mr. Fish, to the agreement which had been made between the United States naval officer and the chiefs of the Navigator Islands, for giving to the United States an exclusive right to establish a naval station and coaling depôt in the Island of Pago-Pago, and I inquired whether the exercise of this right would interfere with other vessels which might frequent the port, or with commercial transactions.

Mr. Fish replied that he had not, since he last spoke to me upon the subject, had access to the document granting the right in question, which had been hurriedly sent to the Senate, at the close of its session, without a copy of it having been kept, and that he could not be able to see it again till the meeting of Congress. His impression from memory, however, was, that although an exclusive right was granted to the United States to establish a naval station and coaling depôt at Pago-Pago, this right would only prevent other Governments from doing the same, but would not interfere with other vessels frequenting the port, nor with their trading there, nor with any commercial transactions, neither would it prevent private coaling depôts from being established there.

Mr. Fish added that since the above-mentioned agreement had been made, a communication had been received signed by all the chiefs of the group of islands, asking the United States to establish a protectorate over the whole of them. As yet the receipt of this communication had merely been acknowledged, and he believed that very little attention would be paid to it.

I have, &c.,

The Earl Granville, K.G.

EDWARD THORNTON.

No. 3.

(No. 79.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 18th November, 1873.

I have been in communication with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on the subject of your Despatch No. 65, of the 1st of August, communicating the wish of your Ministers that the Imperial Government should at once taken steps to prevent the Navigator Islands from falling into foreign hands, or should allow the New Zealand Government to make such arrangements with the chiefs of the islands as will protect New Zealand interests.

No. 3, page 14.

As the nature of the arrangements which the New Zealand Government desires to make with the chiefs of the Navigator Islands is not stated, Her Majesty's Government are unable to form an opinion upon this application.

They would not, however, be disposed to sanction any steps which would lay this Government under obligations to interfere in the affairs of these islands.

I have, &c.,

Governor the Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson, Bart.

KIMBERLEY.

No. 4.

Copy of a DESPATCH from the Right Hon. the Earl of KIMBERLEY to Governor the Right Hon. Sir J. FERGUSSON, Bart.

(No. 12.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 10th February, 1874.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 82, of the 22nd October, enclosing a Memorandum from your Ministers, suggesting whether, if Polynesia is not to be abandoned to foreign nations, it would not be well to entrust to New Zealand the task of aiding in extending British sway to the unappropriated islands of the Pacific, and stating that they have come to the conclusion that the Parliament of New Zealand would cordially entertain proposals which had for their object to give to the Colony the opportunity of assisting Great Britain in this great national work.

No. 4, page 15.

2. Her Majesty's Government had considered your Despatch and the Memorandum with the attention due to yourself and your Ministers, and had prepared an answer to it, but in present circumstances they think it better to postpone sending it.

3. With reference, however, to the passage in the Memorandum, "it is stated on apparently competent authority that the Imperial Government at length entertain the idea of annexing the Fiji group," I have to observe that Her Majesty's Government have given no authority to any one to intimate, on their behalf, any intention to annex those islands.

4. Upon the question of the protection of New Zealand interests in the Navigator Islands, I have to refer you to my Despatch of the 18th of November, No. 79.

I have, &c.,

Governor the Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson, Bart.

KIMBERLEY.