

“The answer is in the negative.” Prior to this, on the 2nd of July, 1883, the Earl of Derby had publicly announced in the House of Lords that it would be regarded as an “unfriendly act” if any other country attempted to make a settlement on the coast of New Guinea. Further, in the telegram announcing General Scratchley’s appointment as High Commissioner to control the New Guinea Protectorate, it was stated that he would also be Deputy Commissioner for portions of New Guinea outside the protectorate.

3. In view of all these assurances, Mr. Service submits that Australian colonists were entitled to rest in perfect confidence that their interest in the neighbouring island of New Guinea was secured by Her Majesty’s Imperial Government; and it must be supposed that the reported action of a foreign Power, if it be a fact, is without the knowledge or consent of Her Majesty’s Government. Yet the reports are so detailed and circumstantial, and, further, so entirely in accord with the published utterances of the German Chancellor, that it seems vain to doubt them.

4. Mr. Service must, in duty to this colony, represent to your Excellency that not only surprise, but indignation, will be the feeling here if the reports referred to should prove to be true. That feeling will, no doubt, be intensified by the recollection that, when colonists acted in their own interests, and hoisted in Her Majesty’s name the Union Jack in New Guinea, Her Majesty’s Government thought fit to repudiate and cancel that proceeding, alleging (to quote from Lord Derby’s despatch of 11th July, 1883) that “the apprehension entertained in Australia that some foreign Power was about to establish itself on the shores of New Guinea appears to have been altogether indefinite and unfounded.”

5. In Mr. Service’s communication of 18th June, 1883, to His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Service, in referring to this, and urging action by the Imperial Government, represented that—“Australia is in this respect fettered in her action by her forming part of the British Empire. She cannot take the course which her truest interest dictates without the authority of the Crown.

A strong feeling of dissatisfaction will spread throughout these colonies if England, while holding Australia back from acting in her own interests, at the same time neglects to take a step which Australia deems essential to her future security and welfare.” The present position of matters is this: that Australia is not allowed to act for herself, neither will the Imperial Government act for her; and meanwhile she has to stand by and see territories the possession of which she regards as essential to her safety and well-being pass to another Power. As one who strongly cherishes the connection of the colonies with the Empire, Mr. Service cannot adequately express the feeling of disappointment which he entertains at the want of response by Her Majesty’s Government to the aspirations of the colonies. Whether this report should prove to be true, or whether exaggerated, in either case it illustrates the extreme unwisdom of slighting the perpetual and strong representations which have unceasingly been addressed to the Imperial Government on this subject for the last eighteen months.

6. But in the present situation it becomes necessary to consider what is yet practicable. In Lord Derby’s despatch of 11th July, 1883, before referred to, it is stated that “If there had been any evidence of the intention, which is said to have been apprehended, of a foreign Power to take possession of any part of New Guinea, the views and proposals of the Colonial Government could have been placed before Her Majesty’s Government by telegraph, and if the circumstances had justified immediate action it could have been taken without a delay of more than a very few hours.” Mr. Service now submits to your Excellency the evidence of the accompanying reports, which can be confirmed or disproved by the Commodore on the Australian station. Mr. Service now records the request, already verbally made, that your Excellency will be pleased to telegraph the intelligence to the Secretary of State, with a request that steps may be at once authorized by telegraph to save to Australasia such of the neighbouring islands as are yet available.

7. Mr. Service further asks your Excellency to convey his strong protest, on behalf of the Colony of Victoria, against the inaction which gives an open invitation to foreign Powers to come and take possession of lands in which no Power can be so much interested as the neighbouring and important communities of Australasia.

I have, &c.,

JAMES SERVICE.

Sub-Enclosure 1.

[From the *Age* newspaper of 19th December, 1884.—Second Edition, *Age* Office, Friday, 3.25 a.m.]

GERMAN ANNEXATION IN THE PACIFIC.

(By Electric Telegraph. From our own Correspondent.) Sydney, Friday Morning.

THE special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* at New Britain wires as follows: “The German war vessels ‘Elizabeth’ and ‘Hyaere’ have arrived here under instructions from the German Imperial authorities to establish a protectorate over all the islands in this part of the Pacific occupied by German citizens or held by German capitalists. The Imperial protectorate has been established over the north coast of New Britain, and the German flag formally hoisted and saluted. The same ceremony of hoisting the German flag over all German property has been performed by these vessels at New Britain, New Ireland, and the Admiralty Islands. A steamer from Samoa, supposed to be in the service of the German Government, has been visiting various portions of the north coast of New Guinea and the adjoining islands for the purpose of concluding treaties with the native inhabitants for the transfer of land to the German Government. So far as I have been able to learn, the object of these purchases is to establish German claims to the territory in Northern New Guinea and the neighbouring islands in preference to any other nation. Already large tracts of territory have been acquired in this way, and wherever this has been done the German flag has been hoisted. The German authorities here have also notified that they will not acknowledge the interests of the citizens of any other nationality than Germany in connection with territory on the northern shores of New Guinea, or in New Britain, New Ireland, or the Admiralty Islands.”