

I anticipate that the issue of this notice will produce a very useful effect upon the lawless British subjects now scattered through the Pacific, by showing them that they are still liable to be tried for the crime of murder committed in one of the neighbouring islands; whilst the inhabitants of the islands in the Pacific, amongst whom translations of this notice will be promulgated, will be made aware that the British Government will, in as far as practicable, protect them from injuries from British subjects, and that there is thus a power to whom they can look for redress in the case of outrages similar to those which were committed at Rotuma.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey, &c.

I have, &c.,
G. GREY.

No. 3.

The Right Hon. Earl GREY to His Excellency Governor GREY.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 9th October, 1848.

Your Despatch No. 13, of the 14th March last, containing suggestions for the extension of the British dominion in the Pacific, has been communicated by me to Viscount Palmerston, and has received from his Lordship and from myself that attentive consideration which its contents require.

It is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to accept at present that submission to her sovereignty which is offered by the chief of Tonga and by the chiefs of the Fiji Islands, of whom your despatch makes mention. Independently of other reasons it is to be apprehended, notwithstanding your arguments as to the ultimate economy of the measure, that the expense which such an extension of empire would necessarily occasion would be larger than Her Majesty's advisers would think themselves justified in proposing to Parliament. The offers which you have received must therefore be declined, but in a manner as conciliatory as possible, accompanied by the expression of Her Majesty's desire to promote as far as may be in her power the welfare of the inhabitants of those islands, although she is unable to accept their proffered allegiance.

Her Majesty's Government have it, however, under consideration whether the appointment of British Consular Agents in places situated in the Pacific, and in the Friendly Islands and Fiji Islands in the first instance, might not be conducive to British interests in that part of the world. The duties of such Agents might be to give instructions and assistance to the native authorities towards the establishment of a regular Government to protect British subjects, and to conclude treaties with such chiefs or Powers as they might consider of sufficient importance. Such treaties might contain stipulations both political and commercial. They might recite, by way of preamble, that Her Majesty is anxious to assist in promoting the progress of prosperity, civilization, and religion in those islands, and that she accords to their inhabitants her disinterested friendship.

The contracting chiefs should engage to receive such Consuls or other officers, and such missionary and other teachers, as Her Majesty may send among them for their benefit and instruction, and that all British subjects and their property and commerce shall be well treated within their respective islands. The chiefs should also contract, in return for the aid afforded them, not intentionally or willingly to do wrong to the subjects of any foreign Power; and it might be either made a further engagement on the part of the native contracting parties that, if involved in disputes with foreign Powers, they should address themselves to the Queen of England, and leave to her to determine what they should do; or, if this be considered as imposing too great a responsibility on Her Majesty's Government, it might be made part of their Agent's instructions to effect the same object by persuasion as far as they may find it in their power.

It is conceived that, if it be found practicable to carry these views into execution, many of the advantages which you dwell upon with so much force may be attained, while this course would not be open to the obvious objections which must apply to an extension of the sovereignty of Great Britain in those parts. You will be fully informed of any measures which it may be deemed advisable to adopt on the subject, and should such Agents be appointed I will request Lord Palmerston to put them in communication with you. You are also desired to furnish Her Majesty's Government with any additional explanation of your own views on the subject, and any facts concerning it which may fall within your knowledge. But I do not think it would be at present expedient that you should leave your Government for the purpose of visiting those islands.

I take the same opportunity of acknowledging your Despatch No. 33 of the 5th of April last, respecting the outrage at Rotuma, of which you have given me previous intelligence. I approve of the Proclamation which you issued on that occasion, and I trust that your exertions may be followed by good results, if not by securing the punishment of this particular offence, at least by showing the light in which such conduct is regarded by the British Government.

Governor Sir G. Grey, &c.

I have, &c.,
GREY.

No. 4.

His Excellency Sir G. GREY to the Right Hon. Earl GREY.

MY LORD,—

Government House, Auckland, 6th November, 1849.

In reference to my despatches specified in the margin on the subject of the present condition of the various islands in the Pacific Ocean lying in the vicinity of these colonies, I have the honor to transmit a letter which I have received from Captain John E. Erskine, R.N., commanding H.M. ship "Havannah," dated Isle of Pines, 22nd September, 1849, containing representations which the principal chief of the friendly islands is anxious to have brought under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey, &c.

I have, &c.,
G. GREY.