

No. 5.

Governor Sir G. GREY to the Right Hon. Earl GREY.

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 11th February, 1852.

I have the honor to transmit to your Lordship an extract of a letter I have received from the Government of the Sandwich Islands. I take the liberty of thus troubling your Lordship because I am anxious that you should see that the inhabitants of the islands in the Pacific are fully aware of the rapid and remarkable progress which the New Zealand Islands have made, that they see that that progress is attributable to the just and liberal line of policy which Great Britain has pursued towards the Native race, and that they are aware that islands circumstanced as those in the Pacific are cannot make any satisfactory and lasting advances without the support of such a great and enlightened nation as Great Britain, and that they consequently view the extension of her power without jealousy or alarm.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey, &c.

I have, &c.,
G. GREY.

No. 6.

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

MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, Auckland, 15th December, 1853.

I have the honor to report for your Grace's information that as I called off the Isle of Pines a few days since in a small colonial vessel, a European came on board and acquainted me that some French men-of-war had recently arrived there, and had taken possession of the Isle of Pines and of New Caledonia, that they had left seamen on those islands who daily hoisted the French flag on them, that depôts for steamers of war were being established by the French at the Isle of Pines and New Caledonia, that the French vessels had then proceeded to Tahiti for the purpose of bringing troops to the Isle of Pines and New Caledonia, and that other preparations were making for occupying the above-named islands with a military and naval force.

2. I have further the honor to report for your Grace's information that, from the excellence of the harbours in those islands, from their commanding position in regard to our colonies in Australia and New Zealand, from their lying directly in the line of communication between those groups of colonies and America, from their in a great measure commanding the route by which our vessels must pass from these colonies either to Great Britain or from New Zealand to India, the occupation of the Isle of Pines and New Caledonia will enable the French, in the event of any future war, most effectually to harass the British trade and colonies in this part of the world; indeed, it would have been impossible to have chosen any other points in this part of the world which would enable France in the event of a war so effectually to embarrass our commerce in these seas and to distress our colonies, that, looking to the fact that the French have themselves no colonies or interests whatever in the neighbourhood of these islands, it is difficult to form any other conclusion than that the occupation of those islands by the French springs from a line of policy which has for its ultimate probable object consequences such as I have above stated.

3. There being, however, some grounds for thinking that Great Britain has a claim to those islands, I have addressed a letter to the Senior Naval Officer on this station requesting him to make a communication to that effect to the French authorities. I enclose for your Grace's information copies of my letters to the Senior Naval Officer, which will put you fully in information of the grounds upon which I have taken this step.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, &c.

I have, &c.,
G. GREY.

Enclosure in No. 6.

His Excellency Sir G. GREY to the SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER, Sydney,

SIR,—

Government House, Auckland, 15th December, 1853.

I have the honor to acquaint you that a few days since I called off the Isle of Pines, and was there informed that some French naval officers had within the last few months taken possession of that island and of New Caledonia, upon behalf of the French Government.

2. It is therefore my duty to request that you will, with as little delay as practicable, despatch one of Her Majesty's vessels under your orders to the Isle of Pines or New Caledonia for the purpose of notifying to the French officers at one of those stations that there are strong grounds for believing that the Isle of Pines and at least a part of New Caledonia are regarded by the British Government as being British territories, and for thinking that this fact has been asserted by various public acts of the British Government and British authorities in relation to the Colony of New Zealand and its dependencies; and that it is therefore probable that the senior French officer should be warned that such is the case, lest he should take any steps in prejudice of British rights to such islands, until this question has been decided between the Governments of Great Britain and France, to which Governments the question has been submitted.

3. I have further the honor to transmit the copy of a letter which I have addressed to the Governor-General of Australia upon this subject.

The Senior Naval Officer, Sydney.

I have, &c.,
G. GREY.