

No. 27.

Brigadier-General H. R. MACIVER to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

MY LORD,—

58, Lombard Street, London, E.C. November 17, 1883.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter of the 15th instant, and now beg to enclose, for your Lordship's perusal, a proof of our final and complete prospectus, which contains the names of the proposed directors and officials.

The originators of this scheme regret to find that your Lordship still seeks to invest this simple trading company with belligerent intentions, although they have positively and distinctly stated to your Lordship that such intentions are entirely foreign, and would indeed be harmful to, their scheme, besides endangering their own persons and interests.

The circular to which your Lordship takes exception, although sent out by my colleagues during my absence from London, does not, I may venture to say, contain anything inconsistent with our assurances to your Lordship. The officials therein alluded to are the resident officials in London, and the managers to whom would be intrusted the foundation of the stations in New Guinea. Those persons who are to be allowed to go out on payment of £20 only are not necessarily agriculturalists, our intention being that all the employés of the company should be induced, by their having an interest and share in the profits of the undertaking, to do their best in their several positions. Families are, by the very nature of the scheme, altogether excluded.

Your Lordship appears to assume that the originators of this scheme are entirely ignorant of the first principles of business, viz., a knowledge of the scene of their intended operations, the various customs of the natives, the extent of trade and the produce of the island. In that your Lordship is mistaken.

For your Lordship's information, I may say that it is not our intention to land trading parties which may have to rely upon the produce of the country for an extended period. The steamer or steamers belonging to the company will be provisioned for at least twelve months, and will supply the stations. The operations of the company's servants will in the first place be directed to the valuable pearl-shell fisheries, and to the development of the timber trade, and mineral deposits which are known to exist. The stations will, by means of the company's vessels, be in constant communication with the Australian ports, to which will be carried the various products obtained by barter with the natives.

Having now given your Lordship a further résumé of our objects, together with the names of responsible gentlemen who are prepared to direct the scheme, I cannot but be sanguine that your Lordship will withdraw your disapproval of our enterprise, as you will be convinced of its perfect *bona fides*, and of the advantages that must accrue from it to British commerce.

In conclusion, should your Lordship continue to withhold your consent to this enterprise, we shall, in view of the large expenditure which we have made over preliminary arrangements, be reluctantly compelled to accept only the services of foreign applicants, and proceed to New Guinea under a foreign flag. This will be the more disappointing to us, as our foremost aim was to found a grand and commercial corporation under distinctly British auspices and in the interests of British trade.

Still hoping to be allowed to proceed with your Lordship's approval.

I have, &c.

The Right Hon the Earl of Derby.

HENRY R. MACIVER.

Enclosure.

THE NEW GUINEA TRADING CORPORATION (LIMITED).—Incorporated under the Companies' Acts, 1862 to 1883. Capital, £250,000 in 12,500 shares of £20 each. Payable—£ per share on application, £ on allotment, and the balance as required.

Directors.—Major-General G. de la Poer Beresford, late Assistant Adjutant-General, Madras Army; William A. Cox, Esq. M.R.C.S. L.S.A. and L.M.; Bolt C. Baynton, Esq. Sutton, Surrey; Captain William Bell McTaggart, late of 14th Hussars; General H. J. Bogle, late Royal Horse Artillery.

Managers in New Guinea.—Brigadier-General Henry R. MacIver, &c.; G. P. Milne, Esq. late Engineer D.P.W. and District Local Fund Board, India; Captain J. Kennerley, late B. Mercantile Marine.

Solicitors.—Messrs. Tibbitts and Son, 1 Field Court, Gray's Inn, W.C.

Chaplain.—Rev. H. de Burgh Sidley (M.A.), Chaplain to Lord Borthwick.

Secretary.—Major C. J. Fallon, 34, Radipole Road, late 1st Leicestershire Regiment.

Temporary Offices.—58, Lombard Street, E.C.

Prospectus.

This company is formed for the purpose of trading with the natives of the Island of New Guinea, and developing the immense natural resources of what is considered to be probably the richest island in the world.

Although the information possessed by Europeans with regard to the interior of New Guinea is still very meagre, it is well known, from the reports of credible persons who have navigated and explored the coasts, that along the northern coast-line the natives are numerous, industrious, and friendly; they raise large quantities of tropical produce, and have shown themselves willing to exchange their productions for European goods. Their crops include among other things the most valuable varieties of tropical vegetation, such as spices, camphor, gums, sandalwood, ebony, tobacco, arrowroot, sago, sugar, and vegetable ivory, besides which birds of paradise, pearls, tortoiseshell, and other exotic products are to be met with in abundance.