

written previous to the receipt of yours, and as it treats only on the subject at issue I take the liberty of sending it, accompanied by a few words of more direct reply to your courteous letter.

The purchase of the land selected for a cemetery would, I think, be justified even if the owners object, because it is directly for the benefit of the natives, and not to be transferred to any one else. I do, however, think that to compel a native to sell land which he objects to part with would be a direct contravention of the terms on which the Protectorate was proclaimed and accepted by the people on the 6th November, 1884.

I was the translator of the documents into the language, and the interpreter in this and several other dialects. Every line was gone over by the Commodore and myself with Mr. Chalmers, that we might explain it thoroughly to the people. No intimation was given either that Her Majesty would require them to part with large tracts of land to the Government, nor yet that a large influx of white men was likely to spread over the land. On the contrary, they were led to expect that the Protectorate would save them from these. If the case had been put to them as it now appears, I do not think the natives would have accepted the Protectorate.

You will remember, Sir, the chiefs this morning said the people were afraid of a number of white men coming.

I am sorry that we should differ in our views on this subject. Practically, I do not think we are far apart. I need not assure your Excellency that I do not wish to see the white man excluded, even if it were possible. I am only anxious that the confidence of the natives should not be shaken, and that the inevitable contact of the races should be for their mutual advantage. In this I know we are at one.

I am, &c.,

W. G. LAWES.

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No. 3.

SIR,—

Mission-house, Port Moresby, 7th July, 1886.

In the conversation which I had with your Excellency yesterday on the land question I fear I may not have made sufficiently clear to you one or two points to which I attach great importance. The scheme, as I understand it, for the acquisition of land sufficient for the demands of the large number expected, implies compulsory purchase where it may be thought necessary, always reserving a certain area for the indigenes of the soil; for if the acquisition of the land is so essential I cannot suppose that the plans of the Government would be thwarted by the unwillingness of a few natives to sell their lands. If the proclamation of sovereignty will involve such acquisition of land, then it seems to me that the Government will begin by breaking faith with the people, and the assurances of Her Majesty will be of no more value than the word of a "beachcomber."

The natives were solemnly told, with all the emphasis which a grand naval demonstration could give to the assurance, "Your lands will be secured to you." The whole tenor, again, of both Proclamation and address was to impress upon the natives the belief that no large influx of foreigners would be permitted, and only those allowed to reside in the country for whose personal good behaviour Her Majesty would be responsible.

If thousands or even hundreds come to New Guinea, what test can any Government employ to distinguish between the evil- and well-disposed? "Evil-disposed men will not be allowed to occupy your land" (Commodore's address). If it was the intention of the Imperial Government to throw open the country for settlement, I think the people should have been told of that intention, that they might have had the opportunity of protesting and objecting.

A New Guinean may, in our children's time, complain of deceit and treachery, and say, "The first official document printed in our language bore the Queen's name, and assured us that our lands would be secured to us, and before the paper had rotted Her Majesty's Government acquired our lands from us."

I fail to see how the Australian Colonies can utter one word of complaint, when combined Australia, from the Convention in Sydney, advised the Imperial Government that no acquisition of land should be permitted except through the Crown: then only for missionary or trading purposes. I go no further, Sir, than the Australian Convention went, and only recommend that the resolution be adhered to.

I had the honour of submitting a letter expressing my views on this subject to the late Sir Peter Scratchley, who expressed his cordial approval, but feared they would be very unpalatable to Australia. The letter appeared in the *Times* of the 12th February last. If your Excellency has not seen it, and would like to do so, I shall be happy to send it up for your perusal.

In conclusion, may I say that I quite believe the commingling of the two races to be possible, and for their mutual advantage; but it must be gradual and by degrees: a stream will fertilise, but a flood will devastate.

I have, &c.,

To the Hon. John Douglas, C.M.G.,

Special Commissioner for British New Guinea.

W. G. LAWES.

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No. 4.

DEAR MR. LAWES,—

Residency, Port Moresby, 8th July, 1886.

I have received your letters of the 7th instant, and have to thank you for so clearly stating your case.

The matter is one of such importance that I shall certainly submit the correspondence to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,

JOHN DOUGLAS.