

known, it would be inexpedient to enter upon any question as to its policy in respect of the islands in question or of their inhabitants; and it will be proper at the present stage of the matter to abstain from any reference as to the probable return of the men forming the subject of your despatch being enforced by authority. At the same time, the chiefs and people of Cook's Group, for reasons seeming to them necessary, placed themselves under the protection of Her Majesty's Government, and you will be justified in according them, should occasion arise, your official protection. And, without any appearance of interference, I request you will ascertain and report to me upon the nature and extent of the plantations established by the Government of Tonga, in respect of which it is importing labourers from other islands in the Pacific.

4. You will also be good enough to ascertain and report whether the s.s. "Richmond" was licensed under the Pacific Islanders' Protection Acts to transport to Tonga the islanders in question.

5. As to the inquiries of the Premier of Tonga, who is responsible for the introduction of the Cook's islanders to Tonga, you are at liberty to inform him that the High Commissioner exercises his authority as far east as Caroline Island—i.e., to the 150th meridian of west longitude—but that the authority for your consular action—so far only in the form of an inquiry—is that the islanders referred to are within your consular district, and, being so, will receive your official protection if necessary. You may further, if you see fit, acquaint the Premier that the British flag has been formally hoisted over the whole of the Cook's or Hervey Group, and the protection afforded by Her Majesty's Government therefore includes the whole of the group so named and their waters.

6. I apprehend the object of the Premier's inquiry is that in the future he may import labourers from islands not under the protection of Her Majesty's Government, and so avoid any consular surveillance and protection being exercised on their behalf.

R. B. Leefe, Esq., &c.

I have, &c.,

JOHN B. THURSTON.

Enclosure 2.

Lord KNUTSFORD to the HIGH COMMISSIONER, Western Pacific.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 18th February, 1890.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 37, of the 20th of November, relating to the importation into Tonga of some natives of the Hervey or Cook's Islands, recently placed under British protection, and to the position of the natives of those islands.

I enclose for your information and guidance copies of a correspondence which has taken place on this subject between this department and the Foreign Office, together with copy of a despatch which has been addressed to the Governor of New Zealand on the subject of the future control of the Hervey Islands.

I have, &c.,

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

KNUTSFORD.

Sub-Enclosures.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the FOREIGN OFFICE.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 20th January, 1890.

I am directed by Lord Knutsford to transmit to you, to be laid before the Marquis of Salisbury, copies of two despatches from the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific respecting the position of natives of the Hervey Islands, recently placed under the protection of Her Majesty's Government.

Lord Knutsford presumes that Sir J. Thurston rightly apprehends the position of the natives of a country under the protection of Great Britain—that is, that they are not British subjects, but are entitled abroad to the protection of Her Majesty's Consular Officers—and he proposes, with the concurrence of the Marquis of Salisbury, to inform him to that effect. It seems desirable also that instructions should be sent to Mr. Exham in the sense suggested in the third paragraph of Sir J. Thurston's Despatch No. 37, as to his action in the matter of issuing licenses for the engagement of labourers.

I am to take the opportunity of transmitting to you a draft of a despatch which Lord Knutsford proposes to address to the Governor of New Zealand respecting the future of these islands, and he would be glad to learn at an early date whether Lord Salisbury concurs in the terms of the draft.

I am, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office.

R. H. MEADE.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 3rd February, 1890.

In reply to your letter of the 20th ultimo, enclosing copies of despatches from Sir J. Thurston in regard to the position of natives of the Hervey Islands, I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to state that, in his opinion, the High Commissioner is correct in his view that the natives of a country under the protection of Great Britain are entitled abroad to the protection of Her Majesty's Consular Officers.

Instructions to Mr. Acting-Consul Exham, disapproving his having countersigned the agreement in virtue of which the natives in question were exported to Tonga, are enclosed for Lord Knutsford's concurrence. I am, at the same time, to state to you that Lord Salisbury agrees in the terms of the despatch which Lord Knutsford proposes to address to the Governor of New Zealand on the subject of the future administration of the Hervey Islands.

I am, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

T. H. SANDERSON.