

The serious fact remains that Consul Knappe, without authorisation from his superiors, without necessary grounds, and without probability of success, brought about military operations on the 17th December last which resulted in the loss of life on the 18th December, the undesired change in the state of our plantations in Samoa, and in endangering our peaceful relations with America.

If Consul Knappe had not issued his demands on the 17th the state of affairs, which, although it was not altogether satisfactory, was still tolerable, might still exist to-day as it was then.

The intention of Consul Knappe, officially communicated to the foreign representatives, to disarm the troops of Mataafa, and later even than those of Tamasese, recognised by us as Sovereign, lay outside the instructions and powers of the Consul, and was not militarily practicable with the scanty and divided forces which were disposable for that purpose.

As regards the negotiations with Mataafa, the statements contained in the report under consideration are not in accordance with former reports. On the 31st January of this year Dr. Knappe had announced that he had endeavoured to bring about a conference with Mataafa, and to change the opinions of the chieftains, but that there was small hope of any yielding disposition being found to exist among those who had revolted.

In the report under consideration, on the contrary, it is alleged that the chieftains had sought a *rapprochement*, and had shown themselves inclined to submit. Now, if such a disposition on the part of those chieftains did really exist, to what result the negotiations could have led is not clear, since concerning Mataafa's frame of mind, which would be of the first importance, nothing is said in this part of the report. Even if the other rebellious chieftains had accepted the requisition made by Herr Knappe, without authorisation from here, that the administration of the Samoa Islands and the duty of representing them abroad should be placed in the hands of Germany, and if Tamasese had agreed thereto, the situation would nevertheless have remained the same, since the necessary assent of the treaty Powers to such an alteration in the political conditions of the country had not been obtained. The situation would not be at all a difficult one if we had to reckon with Samoa alone, and not with the other two Powers. The distinction drawn by Dr. Knappe with regard to these proposals (and other)—viz., that he had not brought them forward formally—is immaterial, and does not alter either their importance or his responsibility. His non-formal proposal was also unauthorised, was contrary to the intentions of the Imperial Government, and was sure to have a retroactive effect on our position with the other treaty Powers, as well as on our enemies in Samoa. It did not, moreover, suffice that Consul Knappe informed his English colleague confidentially that, according to the instructions which he had received, the taking-over by Germany of the administration of Samoa lay without the aims of the Imperial Government. This communication should rather have been made publicly and officially, just as we officially disavowed this proposal of Consul Knappe's to the English and American Governments.

The report that the dependents of Tamasese "awaited in loyal devotion the orders of the German Government" proves that Dr. Knappe did not clearly understand up to the last our relation to the people of Samoa. We have no orders to give them, as far as the ordering of their own affairs is concerned, nor have we any reason to undertake the ordering of those affairs. Our task there is limited to protecting the subjects of the Empire, and to assisting them in the favourable development of their industrial interests.

I do not understand the importance which Dr. Knappe ascribes to the appointment of a pilot for English and American ships. Such appointments, and their publication in Samoan newspapers, are events of daily occurrence. The English and American Consuls have full authority to appoint any pilot whom it may please them for ships of their own flag, and have not thereby failed in their duty either towards ourselves or towards the Government of Tamasese, which is not recognised by England or the United States.

As regards the declaration by Dr. Knappe of the state of war, and the extension thereof to all foreigners residing in Samoa, I can only repeatedly direct your attention to those points of international law which are brought out in my note to the Acting-Chief of the Admiralty of the 5th February, 1889, of which you have already been made aware.

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No. 7.—Sir E. MALET to the Marquis of SALISBURY.—(Received 22nd April.)

MY LORD,—

Berlin, 20th April, 1889.

With reference to my immediately preceding despatch, I have the honour to enclose a translation of a circular issued by the Imperial Chancellor to the German consular officers concerning the action to be taken by naval commanders on application being made to them by the Consuls to take active measures of a warlike nature. The circular in question is of considerable interest and importance in view of the existing state of affairs in Samoa.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD B. MALET.

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Enclosure in No. 7.

(Translation.)

[CIRCULAR.]

THE Imperial Chancellor has issued a circular, dated the 4th instant, which is to be sent to all the German Consuls, and which settles a question which, in view of the proceedings in Samoa, has become of great interest at this moment. The circular runs as follows:—