

THE ANNEXATION OF NEW GUINEA.

FROM the correspondence respecting the annexation of New Guinea laid before Parliament we make the following extracts.

The first letter is one from the late Sir Arthur Kennedy, forwarding to the Colonial Office the following letter, received by him from the Colonial Secretary, under date Brisbane, 26th February:—

Your Excellency,—I have the honour to direct your attention to a correspondence between the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland and the Imperial Government, extending from 17th April, 1874, to 14th January, 1878, on the subject of the colonisation or annexation of New Guinea. A partial result of this correspondence was the annexation to Queensland of certain islands in Torres Straits—namely, Tunn, Saibal, Talbot, &c.; but the main question, that regarding New Guinea itself, seems to have been dropped, chiefly on account of the Australasian colonies (with the exception of Queensland) having shown a disposition to regard it as a purely Imperial question, so far at least as the necessary expenditure was concerned. This Government is of opinion that the time has now arrived for reviving the subject of the annexation of New Guinea; understanding by this, not merely the extending of British sovereignty over such portion of it as is not claimed by the Government of the Netherlands, but the including of such within the territorial jurisdiction of Queensland. With regard to the general question of annexation, I may simply remark that the statement of the considerations in favour of it, as summed up in the Earl of Carnarvon's despatch to Sir H. Robinson, dated 8th December, 1875, still hold good, and with even greater force than at that period—namely:—“(1) That the possession of New Guinea and adjacent islands would be of value to the Empire, and conduce specially to the peace and safety of Australia, the development of Australian trade, and the prevention and punishment of crime throughout the Pacific. (2) That the establishment of a foreign Power in the neighbourhood of Australia would be injurious to British, and more particularly to Australian interests.”

On the first of these considerations no stricture was made by the Imperial Government; and against the second nothing was advanced except an expression of confidence—probably quite justified at the time—in the quiescence of other Powers, so far as new attempts at colonisation were concerned. I do not think, however, that such confidence is any longer justifiable. Without entering into particulars, I may take for granted that your Excellency is fully cognisant of various recent events which give evidence of the fact that the Pacific region generally is now attracting the attention of more than one civilised Power, with the view to the establishment of centres of influence as well as sources of profit; and I may that, having regard to the circumstances referred to, and especially to the accompanying letter from the Agent-General, covering a communication from the honorary secretary of the Colonial Institute, regarding a recent article in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (a translation of which is attached), I am myself of opinion that the probability of the colonisation of New Guinea, or, at all events, the formal occupation of some favourable point on the island, by some other Power than Great Britain, is very largely increased. Independent of the fact that the occupation of some portion of the coast of New

increased. Independent of the fact that the occupation of some portion of the coast of New Guinea can now with little difficulty be undertaken by the Government of Queensland, I would further observe, having still reference to the previous correspondence on the subject, that should it be decided to annex New Guinea to any one of the Australasian colonies, the same arguments, geographical and otherwise, which weighed with the Imperial Government in favour of the annexation of the above-mentioned islands to this colony in particular, are equally cogent toward determining the selection of Queensland as the colony under whose jurisdiction New Guinea should be placed.

Further, such changes, having relation to this subject, as have arisen since the period of the previous correspondence, are of a nature to furnish fresh grounds of expediency for the annexation of New Guinea to Queensland, inasmuch as they prove how rapidly the activity of the colony is developing in that direction, and show also the closer relationship, through increased facilities of communication, existing between Queensland and New Guinea. Among these I may enumerate:—1st. The extension of telegraphic communication from Cooktown to Thursday Island. 2nd. The establishment of the Torres Straits mail service by the Government of Queensland. 3rd. The establishment of a steam mail service between Thursday Island and Normanston. 4th. The appointment of Thursday Island as a station for one of the gunboats now being ordered by the Queensland Government. And to these I would add the establishment by the Imperial Government of a naval coaling depot in the vicinity of Thursday Island,—a circumstance that, besides having an evident bearing upon the general question of the possession of the large island which in the hands of another civilised Power would divide with Great Britain the command of these waters, points also to the nearest territorial jurisdiction—namely, that of Queensland, as the natural source of responsibility for the safety and order of all settlements in Torres Straits.

As one of the first questions likely to arise in connection with this subject, should her Majesty's Government be disposed to give it full consideration, is that of the initial point at which to commence settlement, I would request your attention to the accompanying extract from the report of Captain Pennefather, of the Queensland Government schooner *Pearl*, from which it will be seen that a splendid harbour exists between Yule Island and the mainland of New Guinea. This place the Queensland Government, having regard to its extraordinary fertility as well as safety of anchorage, would be disposed to make the headquarters of colonisation; and, in the event of the Imperial Government deciding upon the annexation of New Guinea to Queensland, this Government would also be prepared to recommend Parliament to grant the necessary appropriation for defraying the cost of settlement, and maintaining, if necessary, an armed force for the defence of the settlers; in this way meeting the objection which, more than any other, seems to have determined her Majesty's Government against taking action in the matter at the period of the previous correspondence.

(Signed) THOMAS M'ILWRAITH.

The article from the *Allgemeine Zeitung* above referred to has already been published in our columns. It gives a long description of New Guinea, and finishes, as may be remembered, by urging that the island should be annexed by Germany as the foundation of a future German-Colonial

island should be annexed by Germany as the foundation of a future German-Colonial kingdom.

This letter was followed up on the same day with a telegram from the Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, to our Agent-General, and a letter instructing him at once to place before Earl Derby a copy of letter from the Royal Colonial Institute. The telegram was as follows :—

Brisbane, 26th February, 1883.

Urge Imperial Government annex New Guinea to Queensland. Reasons large increase steamer traffic through Torres Straits. Population settled there require government. Imperial coaling depot established. Danger to colonies if other Powers take possession. Queensland will bear expense of government and take formal possession on receipt of Imperial authority by cable. Letters by mail. (Signed) M'ILWRAITH.

Then follows an extract from the minute of proceedings of the Executive Council of Queensland, 15th March, 1883. It is as follows :—

His Excellency the Governor-in-Council, at the instance of the honourable the Colonial Secretary, directs the attention of the council to the despatch addressed to him by the Colonial Secretary on the 26th of September last, in which he is asked to urge upon the Imperial Government the desirableness of annexing New Guinea to Queensland, and recommends that to provide against the possibility of that portion of that island adjacent to this colony being annexed by a foreign power, pending a reply to the despatch referred to, that an officer of the Queensland Government be at once despatched to New Guinea fully empowered to take possession, in the name of her Majesty, of so much of the island as is not in possession of the Netherlands Government.

The council advise as recommended.

The Under Colonial Secretary's telegram to Mr. Chester, police-magistrate of Thursday Island, ordering the annexation, is as follows :—

Brisbane, 20th March, 1883.

Immediately on receipt of this message man the Pearl with a sufficient crew and proceed to New Guinea and take formal possession in Her

Majesty's name of whole of the island with exception of that portion in occupation of the Dutch. Leave Mr. Duff in charge during your absence. The Premier leaves to your own discretion to determine on what part of the coast to land but in carrying out this duty it is expected that you will do all in your power to conciliate the natives for whom you had better take a supply of usual trade. When Moresby took possession of Hayter Island he erected a flagship on shore and read the following proclamation :—

After reading this proclamation the Jack was then run up on the flagstaff and saluted and three cheers given. A similar mode of procedure I presume it will be necessary for you to take. After these formalities you will return to Thursday Island and fully report to the Colonial Secretary what you have done.—(Signed) ROBERT J. GRAY.

A telegram acknowledging receipt of above, and a letter from the Colonial Secretary's Office to the Governor, acquainting

him with the proceedings taken, were followed by a telegram from Mr. Chester announcing that on 4th April he had taken formal possession of all that portion of New Guinea and islands adjacent thereto lying between the 141st and 155th meridians of longitude. Mr. Chester's full report of the way in which he had carried out his instructions appeared in our issue of 23rd April. His Excellency the Governor was apprised of the step taken in a letter of 13th April from the Colonial Secretary, of which the following is a copy :—

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—I had the honour to inform you in a communication, dated the 6th instant that, in anticipation of a reply to the despatch addressed by your Excellency to the Secretary of State on the subject of the annexation of New Guinea, Mr. H. M. Chester, police-magistrate, Thursday Island, had, in accordance with instructions from the Government, left Thursday Island for New Guinea on the 24th ultimo, with a view to take formal possession of so much of that island as was not already in the occupation or possession of the Dutch. Advices have since been received from that officer apprising the Government of his arrival at Port Moresby, and of his having, on the 4th instant, taken possession, in the name of Her Majesty, of all that part of New Guinea and isles adjacent thereto lying between the 141st and the 155th meridian of east longitude. In view of a possible request for an explanation of this summary step, it is considered desirable that your Excellency should impress upon the Secretary of State that the Queensland Government have acted under the full belief that the matter was too urgent to admit of the delay necessarily involved in waiting for instructions from the Imperial Government. As the possession of this valuable territory depended on mere precedence in the formality of annexation, and as the Queensland Government, from information received from various sources, had strong reason to believe in the possibility, and even the probability, of being anticipated in their proposed course of action by a foreign power—a contingency which could not but gravely affect the Australasian Dependencies of Great Britain, as tending not only to limit the range of their development but possibly also to imperil their safety—it is hoped that the Secretary of State will perceive that in the step taken by the Queensland Government they have been guided by considerations of expediency, which justify their promptness in taking action in the matter. In anticipating instructions from the Imperial Government they have been also largely influenced by the consideration urged in a former despatch—namely, that by undertaking the whole expense in connection with the formation, maintenance, and defence of a British settlement in New Guinea, they effectually dispose of the only objection raised on the part of the home Government, during previous correspondence on the subject, to the annexation of New Guinea by an Australian colony.—(Signed) THOMAS M'ILWRAITH.

A telegram received from Lord Derby about this time by the Governor, and its reply, are as follow :—

London, 14-4-83.—Router's telegram states Queensland Government taken formal possession New Guinea. Please telegraph explanation.—(Signed) DERBY.

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REPLY :—Government House, Brisbane, 16th April, 1883.—To prevent foreign Powers from taking possession of New Guinea Queensland Government through police-magistrate Thursday Island took formal possession in her Majesty's name on 4th instant pending your decision on my despatch this mail.—(Signed) KENNEDY.

The following telegrams sufficiently explain themselves :—

Col. Secretary, Brisbane, to Agent-General for Queensland: Brisbane, 16th April, 1883. To prevent Foreign Power from annexing New Guinea pending decision of Imperial Government Queensland Government took possession of the island in Queen's name on 4th instant. Strong feeling in all colonies in favour of our action. Strongly urge Lord Derby to approve.—M'ILWRAITH.

Col. Secretary, Brisbane, to Agent-General for Queensland: Brisbane, 16th April, 1883. Place correspondence re New Guinea which you will receive to-morrow before Earl Derby at once.—M'ILWRAITH.

Agent-General Queensland to Col. Secretary, Brisbane: London, 18th April, 1883. Despatches personally delivered at Colonial Office. Representation not unfavourably received. Favourable notices in *Times* and *Telegraph*.—ARCHER.

Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, to Chief Secretaries, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia: Brisbane, 18th April, 1883. As I fear undue pressure upon Imperial Government to repudiate the annexation of New Guinea I shall be obliged if you will cable your Agent-General to inform Lord Derby that our action is approved by the people of New South Wales. Had we by a policy of inaction allowed a foreign Power to annex the island it would have been nothing short of a national calamity for which we by shirking responsibility should have been highly blameworthy.—THOMAS M'ILWRAITH.

Vice-President Executive Council, N. S. Wales, to Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith: Accept my congratulations on your courage foresight and wisdom in annexing New Guinea: P. A. JENNINGS.

Premier of Victoria to Premier of Queensland: Melbourne, 18th April, 1883. Before receipt of your telegram this day I had wired New South Wales and South Australia to join Victoria in instructing Agents-General to support action of the Queensland Government in reference to New Guinea. Replies not yet received but no doubt all will concur. In the name of Victoria I thank you for your prompt attention.—JAS. SERVICE, Premier.

Colonial Secretary, New South Wales, to Colonial Secretary, Queensland: Sydney, 19th April, 1883. The Government views favourably annexation of New Guinea to British Crown and thus expresses itself to Agent-General.—ALEX. STUART.

Chief Secretary, South Australia, to Colonial Secretary, Queensland: Adelaide, 21st April, 1883. Absence from Adelaide prevented earlier reply to your telegram re New Guinea. His Excellency the Governor by the advice of Ministers here has telegraphed Secretary of State as follows. My Ministers wish to express their opinion New Guinea should be under British rule and trust action Queensland Government may lead to that result.—J. C. BLAY.

Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, to Agent-General, Queensland: 18th April, 1883. If you consider it prudent point out Lord Derby

General, Queensland: 18th April, 1883. If you consider it prudent point out Lord Derby that if England refuses ratify annexation New Guinea it will be an invitation to Foreign Powers to annex who would certainly respond. This would be a calamity to Australia.—M'ILWRAITH.

Agent-General, Queensland, to Colonial Secretary: London, 21st April, 1883. Do not consider it prudent at present. All needful facts have been strongly urged on Minister. Invite other Governments to instruct their representatives to support action in New Guinea. Victoria has done so.—ARCHER.

Agent-General for Queensland to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane: London, 21st April, 1883. Ashley said in House last night Government did not contemplate repudiation of annexation. Can I assure Ministry that no responsibility or expense will attach to England beyond defence against foreign aggression?—ARCHER.

Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, to Agent-General for Queensland: 21st April, 1883. All colonies heartily endorse our action and are urging approval. Consider annexation by foreign Power calamitous. Assure Derby no expense Imperial Exchequer. Press early ratification.—M'ILWRAITH.

On 26th April Sir Arthur Kennedy addressed the following despatch to the Earl of Derby :—

My Lord,—I do not propose to trouble your lordship with a repetition of details already before you in reference to the colonial annexation of New Guinea. 2. I have only to express my entire satisfaction with the action of my Government, especially Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, in the matter. 3. I think his apprehension of New Guinea being annexed by another European Power was reasonable, and his promptitude in adopting our only safeguard very laudable. 4. Sir Thomas has laid his views before you, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that they are heartily adopted by all the Australian colonies, which we trust may be our excuse for any irregularity we have committed. 5. I have never heard any well-informed person doubt the great disaster which the occupation of New Guinea by a European Power would prove to Australia. 6. I have had less difficulty in dealing with this subject from the knowledge that her Majesty's sanction was necessary for its completion. 7. I do not anticipate any difficulty in providing for the cost of maintaining an authority.—(Signed) A. E. KENNEDY.

The letter addressed to Lord Derby on 28th February, on receipt of first telegram from Queensland by the Agent-General for this colony, is as follows :—

My Lord,—I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegraphic despatch received from Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, Premier of Queensland, instructing me to urge on the attention of the Imperial Government the expediency of annexing to the colony of Queensland the island of New Guinea, only those portions of the island not claimed by the Government of Holland being meant. In addition to the reasons stated in the telegraphic despatch, I beg to call your lordship's attention to the rapid development of several industries on the coast of New Guinea and the islands adjacent, carried on principally by Queensland colonists. The principal of these industries are gold-mining, pearl-diving, and

Queensland colonists. The principal of these industries are gold-mining, pearl-diving, and *bêche-de-mer* fishing, which employ a rapidly increasing number of colonists, among whom it becomes more and more difficult for the authorities appointed by the Queensland Government to exercise adequate control—the jurisdiction of that Government extending at present only to islands within sixty miles of the Queensland coast. The High Commissioner of the Western Pacific is also quite unable, on account of the very extended nature of his jurisdiction, to exercise an adequate supervision over those settlers who are rapidly peopling the islands and coasts of New Guinea, who are beyond the sixty-mile radius, and therefore practically outside all legal restraint in their dealings with the natives and with each other. A glance at the map will show that whoever is in possession of the southern coast of New Guinea, and more especially of the mountainous peninsula forming the south-eastern extremity of the island, practically dominates Torres Straits and its numerous and important islands, commands the only direct approach to Queensland from Europe, and is able to establish an effectual blockade of the northern terminus of the Transcontinental Railway, about to be extended from Brisbane to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Queensland has already experienced much inconvenience and some loss from the escape and landing on her coast of political convicts and other malefactors from the French penal settlement of New Caledonia, though that island is separated from her by nearly 100 miles of ocean: it is not unreasonable, therefore, that some apprehension should exist in the colony at the possibility of a similar establishment being formed by some foreign Government almost within sight of her territory, and that the Government of the colony should be desirous of taking timely steps to prevent the occurrence of such a misfortune. It is hoped that these reasons will induce your lordship to give the sanction of the Imperial Government to the proposal embodied in Sir Thomas M'Dwraith's telegraphic despatch.—(Signed) THOMAS ARCHER, Agent-General for Queensland.

The following are Mr. Archer's notes of an interview with Lord Derby at the Colonial Office, 1st March, 1883:—

I began by saying I had solicited an interview for the purpose of explaining to his Lordship my views on the *kanaka* question, as far as Queensland was concerned, and I begged to assure him that the allegations of kidnapping and ill-treatment of the islanders, made by the deputation that waited on him some time ago, introduced by Sir Powell Buxton, were, as regards Queensland, baseless. I represented that every precaution had been taken by the Government and Parliament of that colony for many years past to remedy any hardship or anomaly that might have existed in the commencement of the labour traffic, which is now carried on under the provisions of an Act that cannot leave much to be desired by the most ardent friend of the islanders. I also represented that the charges of criminal atrocity, brought against the employers of island labour (of whom I was one) had their origin in political rancour, and the avidity with which these charges were taken up and repeated by a section of the Press in this country, while all opportunity of replying to them was denied to me, said very little for the impartiality of the London Press. Lord Derby asked which papers I alluded to, and when I said the *Echo* and *Truth*, he observed that, as far as the latter was concerned, it was generally understood that its utterances carried very little weight, and did not in any way tend to influence public

and did not in any way tend to influence public opinion. The *Echo* was somewhat higher in the scale, but was known to represent only a small section of the most extreme members of a political party. I now explained that another cause of enmity to the employment of coloured labour in Queensland was the idea that it tended to lower the wages of the white labourers—a fallacy that had been sufficiently disproved by the fact of a great rise in wages during the last two years, in spite of the importation of coloured labourers and the unprecedented influx of immigrants. His lordship inquired what rate of wages prevailed, which I explained, and concluded by begging him to accept any statement made to him about coloured labour in Queensland "with a large handful of salt." I now adverted to the telegraphic despatch received from the Premier of Queensland on the subject of annexing New Guinea to that colony, and the despatch I had written to His Lordship on that question. He observed that it was a very large question, and required very careful consideration before any decision could be arrived at. It was understood, he went on, that the colony proposed to carry out the annexation entirely at her own charges, and that there was no question of interference with any portion of New Guinea that was claimed by another nation, to which I assented. He asked if I was prepared with statistics proving the rapid increase of trade and settlement in the islands and coasts of Torres Straits. I replied, I was not now, but that the information could, doubtless, be got from the returns of the last two or three years, and that of my own knowledge I could state that up to three years ago trade and settlement in that quarter had been rapidly increasing, and there could be no doubt had continued doing so to the present time. I asked if a map could be obtained, and Lord Derby pulled out from a case on the wall a large one of New Holland and all the adjacent islands, on which I pointed out to him the fact that Torres Straits is the only direct channel of communication between Queensland and Europe by the canal, that the southern coast of New Guinea dominates on one side of that channel, and that it would be most detrimental to Queensland if that coast were to fall into the hands of any foreign power. I also pointed out the proposed course of the Transcontinental Railway, and the site of its terminus, and that it and the whole of Northern Queensland would be commanded by any naval power holding the south coast of New Guinea. Lord Derby remarked that it was an immense territory to annex at once, and he thought the object in view could be attained by occupying a small portion of the coast, and thence exercising jurisdiction over all British subjects who are answerable to British laws in every part of the world. I replied that, however that might apply to the subjects of Great Britain, we could, without annexation, have no legal control over the natives or the subjects or citizens of other Powers, with whom complications might arise if we attempted to enforce British law on territory not formally incorporated with a British colony. Lord Derby now made some reference to the state of our finances, and said he understood these were somewhat embarrassed by a heavy debt. I assured him that the debt of Queensland, measured by the standard of our resources and the debts of other Australian colonies, was by no means excessive, and that our finances never were in a better state, as was proved by the considerable surplus in the last budget, and I added that the proposed annexation could be carried out by Queensland so inexpensively as not to cause

... Power responsible for and capable of enforcing peace and good order generally. (4) I pointed out to him that before so grave a step could be considered it would be necessary to be assured that public opinion in the colony would approve the annexation, and that the Legislature would adopt the necessary resolutions, and that there would be no danger of any proposal hereafter to reverse the action now recommended. (5) Mr. Archer expressed himself as decidedly of opinion that the Government would receive such strong and general support in this matter as to prove that the colony fully approved the annexation, and that there need be no apprehension of any attempt being hereafter made to throw off the obligations and responsibilities when once assumed. (6) I inquired whether it might not be apprehended that the occupation of the island in the manner proposed would lead to difficulties with the natives, and Mr. Archer replied that he did not anticipate any such consequence, as he believed that there is no intention of interfering with them, at least for the present, except in those places on the coast where they are already in contact with whites. (7) I then informed Mr. Archer that the subject is one of the greatest importance, as to which a decision could not be formed without very full and careful consideration, and that I presumed that before long I should receive through you full explanations of the proposal and such details as might enable her Majesty's Government to judge whether it can be entertained. In the meantime I stated that I could express no opinion upon the questions raised by the telegram, which must be considered by me with my colleagues in the Government when it has been more formally brought under notice. (8) I shall be obliged by an expression of your own opinion, accompanied by any observations that may occur to you as likely to assist her Majesty's Government in arriving at a right conclusion on this question.

escaped convicts from New Caledonia landing in the colony, and the certainty that this infiction would be greatly aggravated if a similar settlement were formed by a foreign nation so near our shores as New Guinea. Lord Derby now remarked that he understood the main objects of the proposed annexation were—the extension of a lawful government over the population of New Guinea and the neighbouring islands to which the jurisdiction of Queensland does not at present extend, and to prevent any foreign nation from annexing the island. I assented, and he went on to say that it was far too important a question to settle off-hand, and that it would have to come before the Cabinet after the receipt of the letters mentioned in Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith's despatch. I said, "Meantime I hope your lordship will give the question your favourable consideration. He replied, "I will give it serious consideration." I then thanked him, and withdrew.

The despatch sent by Lord Derby to Sir Arthur Kennedy on the subject of the proposed annexation, under date 8th March, ran as follows:—

Sir,—I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of a letter from the Agent-General for Queensland, enclosing a telegram from Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, instructing him to urge her Majesty's Government to annex New Guinea to Queensland, and stating that the colony would bear the expense of government, and would take formal possession on receipt of authority from the Imperial Government. On the day after the receipt of this letter I had an interview with Mr. Archer, who gave further explanations of what he understood to be the views and objects of the Queensland Government in making this important proposal. Mr. Archer stated that it was to be distinctly understood that the Queensland Government did not desire to throw upon this country either the expense or the direct responsibility attendant upon the course proposed to be taken, but requested only such powers and authorities as would enable them to preserve order and repress abuses. He laid stress upon two points—first, the number of British subjects and other Europeans scattered along the coasts of New Guinea who are practically under no jurisdiction or control, and who enjoy immunity from the consequences of all outrages and offences they may commit; and, secondly, the serious inconvenience and danger which would be caused not only to Queensland, but to the other Australian colonies, if any foreign Power were to take possession of that portion of New Guinea which is not claimed by the Netherlands Government, and is in immediate proximity to Queensland. He also drew my particular attention to the continued increase of colonial and other British traffic through Torres Straits, and the probability that the greater part of the commerce between Australasia and the far East would, before long, take this route. (3) In answer to a question which I put to him on the subject, he stated that in his opinion it would not be sufficient to establish an effective jurisdiction over British subjects in New Guinea, inasmuch as foreigners and ships hoisting a foreign flag would not be subject to such jurisdiction, and there would still be, as now, no Power responsible for and

capable of enforcing peace and good order generally. (4) I pointed out to him that before so grave a step could be considered it would be necessary to be assured that public opinion in the colony would approve the annexation, and that the Legislature would adopt the necessary resolutions, and that there would be no danger of any proposal hereafter to reverse the action now recommended. (5) Mr. Archer expressed himself as decidedly of opinion that the Government would receive such strong and general support in this matter as to prove that the colony fully approved the annexation, and that there need be no apprehension of any attempt being hereafter made to throw off the obligations and responsibilities when once assumed. (6) I inquired whether it might not be apprehended that the occupation of the island in the manner proposed would lead to difficulties with the natives, and Mr. Archer replied that he did not anticipate any such consequence, as he believed that there is no intention of interfering with them, at least for the present, except in those places on the coast where they are already in contact with whites. (7) I then informed Mr. Archer that the subject is one of the greatest importance, as to which a decision could not be formed without very full and careful consideration, and that I presumed that before long I should receive through you full explanations of the proposal and such details as might enable her Majesty's Government to judge whether it can be entertained. In the meantime I stated that I could express no opinion upon the questions raised by the telegram, which must be considered by me with my colleagues in the Government when it has been more formally brought under notice. (8) I shall be obliged by an expression of your own opinion, accompanied by any observations that may occur to you as likely to assist her Majesty's Government in arriving at a right conclusion on this question.

(Signed) DERRY.

At the request of the Premier of this colony, Sir Arthur Palmer, then Administrator of the Government, sent a despatch to the Earl of Derby as follows, under date 21st May:—

My Lord,—I do myself the honour to enclose copy of a letter from Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith on the subject of your lordship's despatch of the 8th March last, received since the departure of his Excellency Sir A. E. Kennedy. I find, on referring to his despatch, that Sir Arthur has expressed to your lordship his full concurrence in the action taken by his Ministry. I have only to add my opinion that such action was not only right and proper, but that it should have been taken long since. Had New Guinea been taken possession of by a foreign Power, as was very likely, the consequence to Queensland would have been disastrous, and the navigation of Torres Straits, which may now well be called a highway of nations, be imperilled. I beg leave to remind your lordship that the annexation of New Guinea has been constantly pressed on the attention of her Majesty's Ministers since 1871, not only by Queensland, but by New South Wales, and that in 1875 the question had been reduced to merely one of expense. Queensland in 1883 is in a very different position to that of 1875, and I have little doubt of her willingness to bear the whole of the expense; but so long as New Guinea is made an appanage of the British Crown it appears to me to be a matter of little importance whether she is to be governed by Queensland or directly by the Crown. The difference would be principally one of expense, and looking at the

by the Crown. The difference would be principally one of expense, and looking at the antecedents of Fiji, I have no doubt it would be governed as efficiently and very much more economically from Queensland. I feel quite sure that any attempt to govern, as I see proposed by some of the English journals, by a federation of the Australian colonies, and the expenses paid by subscription from them, would be a failure.—(Signed) A. H. PALMER.

The following notes of a conversation with Lord Derby on the 16th April were sent to the Colonial Secretary by Mr. Archer on the 20th of that month :—

On shaking hands, Lord Derby remarked that he had expected to see me in consequence of the event that had taken place at New Guinea, and he asked if I had received any explanation of the reasons that had influenced the Government of Queensland in taking the step. I produced the cablegram received this morning from the Colonial Secretary, which Lord Derby copied. I offered to leave it, but he declined to keep it. He asked if I had any further explanation, and I suggested that my Government had probably taken action on some information that another Government was preparing to take possession of the island, and I pointed out to his lordship that such an event would be most disastrous to all the Australasian colonies, but more particularly to Queensland, as being nearest to New Guinea; that if the island should fall into the hands of one of the great military Powers of Europe, an impregnable "place of arms" could easily be formed, which would dominate Torres Straits, and be a perpetual menace to the colonies, but more particularly to Queensland, whose coast is almost within sight of New Guinea; that such an event would necessitate a constant state of preparedness in all the colonies, and inflict a grievous burden on the young communities, while, if a penal settlement were formed so near to the Queensland coasts, constant vigilance would be required to prevent the colony being overrun by criminals of the very worst type, as to some extent is the case at present even from so distant an island as New Caledonia. Lord Derby remarked that annexation of territory was apt to continue as long as there remained anything beyond to annex, and I replied that the remark hardly applied to New Guinea, which was separated from other islands by a considerable extent of ocean. He then said, "It is understood that in case of the annexation being sanctioned, no responsibility or expense should attach to the mother-country beyond the obligation of defending against foreign aggression." To this I decidedly assented. On my taking

telegraphic despatch received on the 21st instant from the Premier of Queensland, on the subject of the annexation of New Guinea to that colony. I would beg most respectfully to call Lord Derby's attention to the concluding sentence of the despatch—"Press early ratification"—which shows the anxiety with which the action of the Imperial Government is awaited in the colony; and I would most earnestly beg, if the annexation cannot be at once ratified, that I may be authorised, pending the final decision, to allay that anxiety by giving an assurance to the Government of the colony that the mother-country will prevent any foreign Power from taking possession of New Guinea, an event that would be regarded by the Australasian colonies as an irremediable disaster.—(Signed) THOS. ARCHER, Agent-General for Queensland.

The following telegrams carry the negotiations up to 5th June :—

Secretary of State for Colonies to Administrator of Government of Queensland : London, 1st June. Governor's despatch 19th April. What specific information led Government to believe occupation New Guinea by foreign Power probable?—(Signed) DERBY.

Administrator of the Government to Earl Derby : Government House, Brisbane, 4th June. General rumours of Germany and Italy. Special rumour German corvette *Carola* was leaving Sydney for South Seas with object annexation. She left on 18th March.—(Signed) A. H. PALMER.

Agent-General Queensland to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, London, 5th June, 1883. New Guinea question to come before Cabinet immediately.—(Signed) ARCHER.

leave, his lordship said that the Cabinet would doubtless wish to arrange the matter in accordance with the wishes of the colonies. I thanked his lordship and withdrew.

(Signed) THOMAS ARCHER, Agent-General.

Mr. Archer wrote to the Earl of Derby on 19th April, forwarding the letter of Dr. Robertson, published in the *Glasgow Herald* and subsequently in our columns, giving reasons for advocating the annexation of New Guinea. He also wrote the following letter on the 24th of that month to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies :—

Sir,—I have the honour to enclose, for the information of the Earl of Derby, a copy of a telegraphic despatch received on the 21st instant from the Premier of Queensland, on the