HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

I dine with Gen. Miller, the British consul-general for the Pacific islands, this afternoon, and may be able to pick up some information. I now close this letter, but shall write further by the same conveyance. I have written this as altogether confidential.

With great respect, I have the honor, etc.,

LUTHER SEVERANCE.

Mr. Webster to Mr. Rives.

No. 28.] DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

WILLIAM C. RIVES, Esq., etc.: 

WASHINGTON, June 19, 1851.

SIR: In the dispatch from this Department (No. 15) of the 5th of July last, you were instructed with reference to the application of Messrs. G. P. Judd and James Jackson Jarvis, special commissioners of the Hawaiian Government, for the mediation of the Government of the United States for the purpose of adjusting the differences between that Government and the Government of France. In your dispatch (No. 49) of the 12th of September, you stated that you would avail yourself of the first suitable occasion towards bringing about an amicable adjustment of the controversy. It is believed, however, that you have not since mentioned the subject.

It appears from the accompanying letters addressed to the Department and to the Rev. Rufus Anderson by Mr. Judd, from Panama, that the French Government declined to accept the mediation of the Government of Great Britain, and dispatched an agent to the Sandwich Islands, whom Mr. Judd met at Panama, waiting for the arrival of an armed force from Callao, with which he intended to proceed to the islands for hostile purposes. The public journals have since announced that he had reached his destination and had entered upon a correspondence with the Hawaiian Government. This intelligence has given the President much pain. It has also alarmed the American Board of Missions, whose corresponding secretary visited this city last autumn, brought with him the letter from Mr. Judd to the Rev. Mr. Anderson above referred to, and made application for vessels of war of the United States to be sent to the islands for the protection of the persons and property of the missionaries there.

Under these circumstances, if you should not already have made the French Government acquainted with the interest we feel in the independence of the islands, you will lose no time in taking that course.

The proceedings of M. Dillon and the French admiral there in 1849, so far as we are informed respecting them, seem, both in their origin and in their nature, to have been incompatible with any just regard for the Hawaiian Government as an independent state. They can not, according to our impressions, be accounted for upon any other hypothesis than a determination on the part of those officers to humble and annihilate that Government for refusing to accede to demands which, if granted, must have been at the expense of all self-respect and substantial sovereignty. The further enforcement of those demands which, it appears, is the object of Mr. Perrin's mission, would be tantamount to a subjugation of the islands to the dominion of France. A step like this could not fail to be viewed by the Government and people of the United States with a dissatisfaction which would tend seriously to