When we arrived at Honolulu we found a new King, Lunalilo, had been elected by an almost unanimous vote of the people. He had been inaugurated, and his Government was established in an orderly manner. At an audience with the King and his ministers, Admiral Pennock made known his instructions from the Secretary of the Navy, to offer a passage to the late King to the United States.

We were present at this interview and the announcement of the generous intentions of the Government of the United States toward the late King appeared to establish, at once, the best relations between the new King and Admiral Pennock, as also between the members of his Government and ourselves.

This was fortunate, as it gave us all desirable facilities for accomplishing the objects of our visit; enabled us to converse frankly with the King and his ministers upon the subject and to ascertain their feelings and wishes concerning it, as well as their general policy toward the United States. We ascertained from the officers of the U.S. Navy, from maps, and from seafaring men that Honolulu is the only good commercial harbor in the whole group of the Sandwich Islands.

There are many other so-called harbors, or places for anchorage, but they are mostly open roadsteads affording shelter only from certain winds, and they are all entirely incapable of being defended by shore batteries. Even the harbor of Honolulu itself can not be defended from the shore. It is a small harbor lying seaward from the land and only protected from the sea by outlying coral reefs.

An enemy could take up his position outside of the entrance to the harbor and command the entire anchorage, as well as the town of Honolulu itself. This harbor would therefore be of no use to us as a harbor of refuge in a war with a powerful maritime nation.

With one exception there is no harbor on the islands that can be made to satisfy all the conditions necessary for a harbor of refuge in time of war. This is the harbor of Ewa or Pearl River situated on the Island of Oahu, about 7 miles west of Honolulu.

Pearl River is a fine sheet of deep water extending inland about 6 miles from its mouth, where it could be completely defended by shore batteries. The depth of water after passing the bar is ample for any vessel.

Pearl River is not a true river; it partakes more of the character of an estuary. It is divided into three portions called "locks"—the east lock, the middle lock, and the west lock, the three together affording some 90 miles of water front, with deep water in the channels. Of these locks the east lock is the best, having the most room, the deepest water, and presenting the greatest facilities for shore improvements. In the middle of this lock there is an island called "Rabbit Island," having deep water close to its shores and fine anchorage all around it. This island is a level coral island, rising only a few feet above high-water level. It is destitute of fresh water, but there is a great abundance of good water on the adjacent shores, which could be carried to the island at small expense.

From our examinations we are of the opinion that this island and the adjacent shore to the north and west of it afford the most advantageous location for a naval depot of supplies and equipment in all these waters. But there is not sufficient water at present for heavy vessels to enter this Pearl River harbor. At the entrance to the harbor is a coral reef some 250 to 300 yards in width, with a depth of water of only 2 to 3 fathoms on the reef at low water. This reef appears to extend around the island, being broken only at the entrance to Honolulu Harbor, and