hesitation and delay. If the United States Government does not very promptly provide for laying a cable from San Francisco or San Diego to Honolulu or Hilo, it may be regarded as certain that a cable will be laid by British capital and be controlled by British managers. Pearl Harbor for a coaling station and an American cable between California and Hawaii are of immediate importance to American commercial and naval interests and to the maintenance of American influence on these islands.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLANDS.

A question of vital importance to Hawaii and of American interest in and care for its future is that of its government. There has been in the last twenty years a great change in the political status of things here. Formerly the facts and circumstances appertaining to government on these islands were essentially different from what they are today. Then the population was chiefly native Hawaiian. The natives had long lived under a kind of feudal system, with rigid laws and customs, which gave to the numerous chiefs and the King absolute despotic power. The wisdom and the religious zeal of the Christian missionaries enabled them to acquire and exercise a strong influence for good over the chiefs and King as well. Thus a system of government and laws were established which were a great improvement on the former condition of things. The general good character of the men who effectively aided the Hawaiian monarch to carry on the Government for years secured fairly successful administration of law and the maintenance of public order at limited cost, the public revenues being small. But the numerous Hawaiian chiefs are in their graves. Their families are extinct. The original native Hawaiians are now so decimated as to number less than two-fifths of the population of the islands.

The coming to the throne of the late King Kalakaua in 1873 was by legislative election, and but for the presence in the harbor and on shore of American marines and sailors, of the United States vessels of war, he would have failed to secure his crown against a determined mob in the interest of another aspirant. The great prosperity of the islands under the reciprocity treaty, stimulating the production of sugar, leading to a large American, European, and Asiatic immigration, caused a large increase of the Government revenues. This prosperous state of things also soon resulted in a large increase of the Government expenditures, in the addition of new offices, a large augmentation of salaries, thus stimulating the desire for official places and patronage, exciting the greed of adventurous and too often unworthy political partisans. Easy going, unused to and incapable of safe and economical administration, the King, Kalakaua, too often, in his seventeen years of reign, fell into the hands of unscrupulous associates and advisers. The Government expenditures soon reached figures much above what the area and population of the little kingdom justified. But so long as the great profits of sugar-raising under the American tariff flowed into the islands, the excessive Government expenses could be paid without the principal taxpayers very sensibly realizing the burden.

The adoption of a new constitution in 1887, taking from the King much of his former power and establishing legislative and ministerial responsibility, effected a beneficial change. But the great reduction of the profits of sugar-raising, rendering some of the plantations nearly worthless, and greatly lessening the income and market value of the others, has brought a condition of affairs which compels all the reflect-