

No. 2.

Mr. Stevens to Mr. Foster.

No. 79.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,
Honolulu, January 18, 1893. (Received February 3.)

SIR: In my 73 of November 8 I gave full information of the surrender of the Queen to the wishes of the legislature by the formation of a ministry composed of men of intelligence and wealth possessing the entire confidence of the business men and the more responsible citizens of the country. But this surrender of the Queen and of those surrounding her was only seeming. As soon as the principal appropriations had been voted and the legislative work was nearly concluded, several of the best members having already left for their homes, a remarkable conspiracy was revealed.

The undersigned, for the first time since he has been at the head of this legation, January 4 took passage for Hilo and the volcano on the U. S. S. *Boston* for the benefit of the health of himself and of his daughter, it being also desirable that the town of the second importance in the islands should have this attention at the time the *Boston* was making a visit to Hawaii, the chief island in the group. Beyond all doubt, immediately after the *Boston* and myself had left Honolulu the unscrupulous adventurers around the Queen improved the opportunity to push through the legislature an astounding lottery franchise with the obvious intent to sell it out to the Louisiana lottery men. This was worked by some of the same parties supposed to be of the powerful opium ring whose four points of operation are Vancouver, San Francisco, Honolulu, and Hongkong. They distributed the lottery stock among the native members of the legislature in large figures.

Notwithstanding the strong opposition of all the best people of the islands, including whites and natives, and the emphatic opposition of the chamber of commerce, the Queen and her palace favorite gave their warmest support to the lottery bill and signed it at once. She was to be immediately compensated by being allowed to proclaim a new constitution, restoring to the Crown the old despotic prerogatives in direct violation of the existing constitution, which provides for the only mode of change, which is by the action of successive legislatures.

Returning on the *Boston* from our Hilo trip on the 14th instant, we found the legislature was to be prorogued at 12 a. m., one-half hour after my arrival at the legation. The prorogation completed, members of the legislature, diplomatic corps, judges of the supreme court, and other officials went to the palace by invitation. In the meantime it began to be known in public circles the Queen's intention to proclaim the revolutionary constitution. This resulted in raising an excitement which alarmed her confidants and caused some of them to draw back. This consumed time, so that she could not secure the signatures of her new cabinet as she had expected. In the meantime the diplomatic corps grew weary and left the palace, realizing that the invitation to be present was a trick.

As I had just returned, weary from my voyage, I had not received the invitation, the chamberlain knowing I was absent when he invited the English, Portuguese, French, and Japanese diplomatic representatives the day before. In the short meanwhile I had suspicioned the trick. Finally, the Queen appeared in the throne room, before the supreme judges and other officials, in an extreme passion of anger, and avowed her purpose to postpone her revolutionary constitution for a