Mr. Stevens to Mr. Blaine.

United States Legation,
Honolulu, November 14, 1890.

SIR: After a session of 146 days the Hawaiian Legislature adjourned finally to-day. The general course of its proceedings has been more deliberate and conservative than it was generally anticipated by the most thoughtful citizens.

As my previous dispatches have indicated, the first months of the session were somewhat stormy and there was considerable public excitement, mainly growing out of the attempt to change the constitution in a revolutionary way and in a reactionary direction. The defeat of this movement was so complete and decisive that the malcontents gradually lost a large degree of their influence and gave up their efforts as hopeless, at least for the present. Some amendments to the constitution have been voted nearly unanimously, while the constitutional convention scheme was rejected by a large majority. But the amendments thus passed through their first stage do not restore to the King any of the power taken from him by the constitution of 1887, and the functions of the Legislature and of the ministry are not at all impaired. This result has been largely owing to the good conduct and superior ability of the reform members, who, with a majority of two or three against them at the beginning of the session, were enabled largely to control the Legislature. In this they had the cooperation of some of the most conservative of the opposition party. A careful review of what has transpired confirms the opinion that the earnest advice which the English commissioner and myself gave His Majesty was expedient and salutary.

In this connection I may be allowed to remark that the sudden return here by Admiral Brown in the Charleston from Puget Sound, about which more or less comments were made by the Pacific Coast press, was not at my solicitation, but was entirely unexpected by me, my request having been only for the retention of one United States ship here. But it is just to say, that it is the judgment of the best informed and most responsible men here that the coming into the harbor of that powerful ship of war, the circumstances being as they were, had a very pacifying effect on the disorderly elements here. The average native mind and the more irresponsible of the foreign population looked upon it as a plain determination of the United States Government not to tolerate disorder on these islands.

After the decision of the question of the constitutional convention the most exciting and important issue before the Legislature has been that of "labor." The sugar and rice farmers have a pressing need for seven or eight thousand more laborers than are attainable in the islands. The Japanese and Chinese are regarded the most available, and a majority of the planters prefer the latter. Yet there is among all classes a strong aversion to receiving into the country more Asians. The Legislature has passed, finally, with general unanimity, a very stringent bill, allowing the admission of more Chinese under a specific contract, with adequate bonds that they shall engage in no other employment than on the sugar and rice plantations, and that at the close of their terms of engagement they shall return to China. This measure does not apply in any of its provisions to persons now in the islands.

The amount of appropriations voted are large, considering the population of the country. The total amount for the two years covered is