Mr. Blount to Mr. Gresham.

No. 2.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, May 24, 1893.

SIR: The letters of Mr. Nordhoff to the New York Herald, on the situation of affairs in the Hawaiian Islands, have produced intense resentment in the minds of American residents and of white annexationists generally here.

On the 21st instant Dr. J. C. McGrew, who claims to be an American citizen, and who is a leading member of the Annexation Club, and the editor in chief of the Hawaiian Star, which belongs to the Annexation Club and is a quasi official organ of the Government, reported to Admiral Skerrett that there had been quite an excitement all day long amongst persons who were offended by Mr. Nordhoff's letters, and that he had scarcely been able to restrain them from insulting Mr. Nordhoff by applying to him a coat of tar and feathers.

I immediately addressed a note to Mr. Dole, a copy of which I inclose herewith. (Inclosure No. 1.)

Later in the day Dr. McGrew informed Admiral Skerrett that there would be no effort to tar and feather Mr. Nordhoff, but that proceedings would be taken the next day in court against him.

The following day brought no answer from President Dole to my communication.

In the afternoon of the 22d instant, a paper was served upon Mr. Nordhoff—a copy of which I inclose.

The assertion of a power under the color of law to hold Mr. Nordhoff responsible for the publication of his letters in the New York Herald being regarded as without warrant of authority and in violation of his rights as an American citizen, I determined immediately to communicate to the Government a denial of their right to proceed against him on account of said publication.

Desiring to avoid any semblance of too great readiness to enter into a controversy with the Hawaiian Government over this matter, I went to see President Dole, and called attention to the action of the attorney general and informed him that the Government of the United States would not submit to the exercise of such a prerogative on the part of the Hawaiian Government; that I deemed it proper to hold a conversation with him, hoping to avoid thereby any official correspondence which might produce acerbity or the slightest estrangement. He replied that he was very much obliged to me for having taken such a course, and that the question raised would be examined and the conclusions reached communicated to me.

He then referred to my letter, saying that he would have answered it, but supposed that it was intended simply to give him notice of the facts stated. I replied that I regretted he had not seen fit to give me any information concerning the matter in writing in order that the same might be forwarded to the Government of the United States; that I hoped the additional subject of controversy, to which I invited his attention, would be adjusted in a manner consistent with the honor of the United States, and so speedily that I might be able to communicate this also to the home Government. After some conversation on this subject he informed me that the advisory council had requested Mr. Nordhoff to come before it, and asked me if I thought he would come, as it was only a request. To this I answered, "I presume not. Whatever information Mr. Nordhoff may have obtained carried with it an obligation of privacy, which I do not believe he would violate."