Mr. Blount to Mr. Gresham.

HONOLULU, H. I., July 17, 1893.

SIR: On the 11th of March, 1893, I was appointed by the President of the United States as special commissioner to the Hawaiian Islands. At the same time the following instructions were given to me by you:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 11, 1893.

SIR: The situation created in the Hawaiian Islands by the recent deposition of Queen Liliuokalani and the erection of a Provisional Government demands the fullest consideration of the President, and in order to obtain trustworthy information on the subject, as well as for the discharge of other duties herein specified, he has decided to dispatch you to the Hawaiian Islands as his special commissioner, in which capacity you will herewith receive a commission and also a letter whereby the President accredits you to the president of the executive and advisory councils of the Hawaiian Islands.

The comprehensive, delicate, and confidential character of your mission can now only be briefly outlined, the details of its execution being necessarily left, in great measure, to your good judgment and wise discretion.

You will investigate and fully report to the President all the facts you can learn respecting the condition of affairs in the Hawaiian Islands, the causes of the revolution by which the Queen's Government was overthrown, the sentiment of the people towards existing authority, and, in general, all that can fully enlighten the President touching the subjects of your mission.

To enable you to fulfill this charge, your authority in all matters touching the relations of this Government to the existing or other government of the islands, and the protection of our citizens therein, is paramount, and in you alone, acting in cooperation with the commander of the naval forces, is vested full discretion and power to determine when such forces should be landed or withdrawn.

You are, however, authorized to avail yourself of such aid and information as you may desire from the present minister of the United States at Honolulu, Mr. John L. Stevens, who will continue until further notice to perform the usual functions attaching to his office not inconsistent with the powers entrusted to you. An instruction will be sent to Mr. Stevens directing him to facilitate your presentation to the head of the Government upon your arrival, and to render you all needed assistance.

The withdrawal from the Senate of the recently signed treaty of annexation for reexamination by the President leaves its subject-matter in abeyance, and you are not charged with any duty in respect thereto. It may be well, however, for you to dispel any possible misapprehension which its withdrawal may have excited touching the entire friendliness of the President and the Government of the United States towards the people of the Hawaiian Islands, or the earnest solicitude here felt for their welfare, tranquility, and progress.

Historical precedents, and the general course of the United States, authorize the employment of its armed force in foreign territory for the security of the lives and property of American citizens and for the repression of lawless and tumultuous acts threatening them; and the powers conferred to that end upon the representatives of the United States are both necessary and proper, subject always to the exercise of a sound discretion in their application.

In the judgment of the President, your authority as well as that of the commander of the naval forces in Hawaiian waters should be and is limited in the use of physical force to such measures as are necessary to protect the persons and property of our citizens, and while abstaining from any manner of interference with the domestic concerns of the islands, you should indicate your willingness to intervene with your friendly offices in the interests of a peaceful settlement of troubles within the limits of sound discretion.

Should it be necessary to land an armed force upon Hawaiian territory on occasions of popular disturbance, when the local authority may be unable to give adequate protection to the life and property of citizens of the United States, the assent of such authority should first be obtained if it can be done without prejudice to the interests involved.

Your power in this regard should not, however, be claimed to the exclusion of similar measures by the representatives of other powers for the protection of the lives and property of their citizens or subjects residing in the islands.