MEMORANDA

OF

CONVERSATIONS AT BERLIN

ON

COLONIAL MATTERS

BETWEEN

Mr. MEADE (Assistant Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office) and Prince BISMARCK and Dr. BUSCH.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

February 1885.

EXTRACT from OFFICIAL LETTER FROM Mr. MEADE TO EARL GRANTLY. [Received December 23.]

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Memoranda of Conversations between Mr. Meade and Prince Bismarck and Dr. Busch.

No. 1.

MEMORANDUM BY Mr. MEADE.

Hôtel Royal, Berlin, February 10, 1885.

I observe that the “White Book” on the subject of New Guinea and the Western Pacific, just issued, contains some portion of the Confidential Memorandum which I handed to Dr. Busch after my conversation with him of December 7.

As this has given rise to misconceptions, it may perhaps be thought right to present to Parliament the whole of that Memorandum, as well as my further reports, including that of the interview which His Serene Highness Prince Bismarck was good enough to give me on December 24.

The conversation with Dr. Busch, in which I developed to him a suggestion of my own for the general arrangement of questions pending between us in New Guinea and the South Seas, was purely personal and unofficial. I took every possible precaution that this should be clear, and it was so accepted by Dr. Busch.

He called on me a week later to tell me that Prince Bismarck wished to discuss the matter with himself. If I had anticipated that the confidential character of my proposal would thereby be removed, and that it would be published, I should have either refrained from carrying on the discussion or gone into much greater detail.

Finding in Berlin a strong impression as to our supposed antagonism to German colonization, I thought it would be well to endeavour to define some general policy which might place our Colonial relations with Germany on a better footing. Hence my conversation with Dr. Busch of December 7.

Had I been given any hint at the time of this conversation that Germany, in contravention of what everyone of us at home believed to be the understanding between the two Governments, had assumed a protectorate over any part of New Guinea, I should never have broached the subject, but it was discussed between us as if no such step had ever been contemplated.

There seems to be some not unnatural misapprehension in England, and consequently, I fear, in the Colonies, as to my observations in regard to the New Hebrides, and I should like to explain that my reference to those Islands was solely intended to show that Germany and England are not the only Powers interested in the South Seas. The questions between England and France respecting this particular group were our own concern, and I therefore merely mentioned the subject, without going into the details of what we should require from France as an equivalent for the withdrawal of the understanding as to the independence of the New Hebrides.

It is of course obvious that I never intended to propose to give the New Hebrides to France as part of a bargain with Germany, or to surrender any British claims there, except upon terms which would be thoroughly satisfactory to the Australasian Colonies, and this was fully understood at the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office when my Memorandum was received.

(Signed) R. H. MEADE.

No. 2.

EXTRACT FROM A PRIVATE LETTER FROM MR. MEADE TO EARL GRANVILLE. (Received December 15.)

(Private.) Hôtel Royal, Berlin, December 13, 1884.

I have had a long talk with Dr. Busch, the Under Secretary, and I said all that I wanted to say. As we got friendly and confidential, I developed a scheme I had been considering for a general settlement of all the Colonial questions affecting the two countries.

I need scarcely say that it was a purely unofficial communication, but I had no hesitation in broaching the subject when I found Dr. Busch willing to entertain it.

I enclose you a copy of the Memorandum recording what passed at our interview, and also of the letter to Dr. Busch in which I sent it to him, asking him to be good enough to say if in any respect I had not done justice to what he said.
On the only occasion on which I saw the lessee of the Angra Pequeña Islands, he told me that he was quite prepared to make terms with the Germans, and only desired to be placed in communication with the German Government, so I do not anticipate difficulty in that quarter. If he is satisfied and we secure promise of fair treatment for any others of our countrymen established within the new German Protectorate, I do not think that the Cape would object to the cession of these islands and rocks to Germany.

I have not had time to make another copy of my Memorandum or of the letter to Busch to send to Herbert. Perhaps you would send this on to him to see, and his copying department can take a copy for the Colonial Office.

If it has not already been done, I think that it would be a very good thing if Governor Young on the Gold Coast and Consul Hewett were both told that as all our disputes on the West Coast may now be considered as having been settled by our respective annexations and Protectorates, he should be careful to cultivate the most friendly relations with the German authorities, Mr. Young with those of Bagelidah, and Mr. Hewett with the Cameroons, and that as regards the latter, Mr. Hewett should do what he can to smooth matters down, using whatever influence he may possess with the natives to accept their new masters, and with the English traders to keep quiet, and not raise difficulties.

Enclosure 1 in No. 2.

MEMORANDUM.

I had yesterday a long and interesting conversation, which by mutual agreement was to be of a purely unofficial and private character, with Dr. Busch, at the Foreign Office.

I told him that it would be very useful to me if he would let me frankly put before him what I had to say, looking at the recent discussions between our two Governments, from the Colonial Office point of view.

I assured him that we at the Colonial Office had no jealousy whatever of the recent development of German colonial enterprise, that we felt that the world was large enough for all, and that since I had been in Berlin, I had taken every opportunity to use this language, speaking more especially on the subject with Herr Woermann.

I said it would be mere affectation on my part to pretend that there is not a very strong feeling of suspicion on the part of Germany of English policy in this respect, and that in the last week I had noticed three proofs of it, which gave me great pain, and which I feared showed that all I had said had fallen on barren ground, for I had learned that suspicions had been entertained of our intentions at the Cameroons, the Island of Samoa, and Bechuanaland.

As regards the first, I said that we were doing and contemplating nothing which could militate in any way against their free action at the Cameroons, or hamper their development and communication with the interior. That we wished the Germans all success, that no intrigues were or would be tolerated by us, that there was, no doubt, some natural feeling of irritation on the part of the English residents when the German Protectorate was announced, but that this was all past; we certainly had intended to take the Cameroons, but they had forestalled us, and we had no other wish now than for their success. That at this moment Mr. Baynes, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, was in Berlin, anxious to explain to the Foreign Office that though he would have preferred the sovereignty of our own country, he was quite prepared loyally to accept the new order of things at the Cameroons, and to express his readiness to offer the co-operation of his Society in facilitating the establishment of German rule.

I said that we could not control the intrigues of rival traders, but they would not be countenanced by us, and that from what I had heard, the English houses were prepared to work with the new rulers of the country in a friendly manner.

As regards Samoa, I said that we were perfectly guiltless in the matter, that Prince Bismarck’s inquiry was the first intimation we received that the King had taken recent steps to obtain definitive protection from us.

It is quite true that New Zealand has long been anxious to acquire Samoa, and it is possible that Colonial Ministers may have said things which might alarm the German
Consul, but the German Government should receive with great caution statements as to the intentions of Her Majesty’s Government received from their Consuls in British Colonies.

A Colonial Government could not undertake annexations, and I believed that much misapprehension had been caused by too great readiness to accept the views expressed by a Colonial Ministry as those of the Imperial Government.

I added that it would have been especially mean on the part of my Government if they had really done anything of the kind imputed to them when the two Governments had agreed to examine the whole question together, so soon as the German Consul at Sydney reaches Europe.

With regard to Bechuanaland, I said that we were engaged in clearing out certain freebooters from the British Protectorate, whose conduct was condemned by all the respectable community, Dutch and English alike, throughout South Africa. That the Transvaal had not observed the provisions of the Treaty in this respect, signed in London so lately as February in this year. That it was necessary to enforce those provisions, and that I had every hope there would be no fighting at all, but that we could not afford to risk another Majuba Hill, and that it was necessary to send a force before which resistance would be unavailing. To send a weak force would, on the contrary, invite resistance, and that I did not think the 3,500 men of all ranks, including Commissariat, was in excess of the requirements of the service by a single man.

I pointed out that Angra Pequenia, the inland limits of which are stated by Germany to be 20 miles, is separated from Bechuanaland by over 700 miles, of which the greater part is desert, and that there could be no possible connexion between our expedition and the interests of the German Colony, and the German Government might rest assured that we had no ulterior designs on it whatever.

I reminded Dr. Busch that on a recent occasion Prince Bismarck had said that it was all very well dealing with the English Foreign Office, but that when the matter in discussion went to the Colonial Office we were in the habit of looking at things from a purely “British interest” point of view. I said that it was our duty to do so, and it was a compliment which is not often paid to the Colonial Office by Colonial Governments, who generally accuse us of sacrificing their interests to the exigencies of European diplomacy. But that while standing up, of course, for our own actually acquired rights, we had no jealousy whatever of German colonial extension.

In proof of this I told him that as soon as we at the Colonial Office realized that Germany wished to found a Colony at Angra Pequenia, we at once acquiesced, and had no wish to enter into a quarrel with Germany on such a point.

Further, I said that when we learned that the Germans had definitively taken the Cameroons, it was the Colonial Office that suggested to the Foreign Office that it should be proposed to Germany, having taken the Cameroon rivers, that she would do well in annexing the remaining rivers, the Lungassi, Qua Qua, &c., between them and the French.

The German Government had replied that they had already done so. We were not aware of this at the time, and the proposal coming from the Colonial Office, shows that that Department is not as hostile to Germany as Prince Bismarck would appear to suppose.

I expressed a hope that as they learn that we have no feeling of this kind, they will attach less importance to the numberless rumours that busibodies all over the world are ready to invent. I said that whenever we heard some rumour of hostile designs on the part of Germany, we did not found upon them complaints. For instance, I said, we sometimes heard rumours that Germany had designs on the strip of coast between Natal and Delagoa Bay. We knew that this was impossible, as we had rights there founded on treaties, and that Zululand was especially under our influence and protection. Yet we do not at once write and ask for explanations. We know that the story is but an idle rumour, and treat it as such.

We send 3,500 men into the interior of South Africa on a matter which in no way concerns any other European power, and the Germans ask us what we are doing.

It never occurred to us to attribute dark designs to the German Government when they sent an unusually powerful squadron of five ships to visit their new acquisitions on the West Coast of Africa. We did not express any uneasiness and imagine that a coup de main was intended by Germany against any of our colonial possessions.

Dr. Busch replied by thanking me for this frank statement, and said that he was very glad to hear it, and would repeat what I had said to Prince Bismarck, and he hoped it would bear good fruit. I interrupted him for a moment by saying that I trusted he
would till the ground and cultivate the seed I had sown, which he laughingly promised
to do.
He went on to say that, as regards the Cameroons, he certainly had heard that
considerable opposition had been offered to German proceedings by Consul Hewett,
and that he hoped that he and our other subordinate officers would receive instructions
to co-operate with the German officers, so that mutually they might assist each
other.
I assured him that this was the wish of our Government, that I thought instructions
had been already given to this effect, that any soreness of feeling at being forestalled,
which some of our subordinate officers on the spot might have felt, is now a thing of the
past.
As regards Bechuanaland, he said that Prince Bismarck feared we were about to
use the large force we had collected forcibly to annex further territories, cutting the
Germans off from any extension inland beyond their general limit of 20 miles; but that
he was very glad to hear that we had no ulterior objects in sending the force into the
Protectorate than those I had mentioned.
He went on to say that, as regards the five ships, there was a strong feeling in
Germany in favour of adequately protecting their new acquisitions; and it was
thought wise to send a large force in case there should be any difficulty with the
natives.
I begged him to understand that I did not mean to imply that the fact that they sent
five ships required any explanation; I had only referred to the subject as an illustration
in my argument, but he insisted on explaining it.
On the general subject he said that he looked on this step taken by Germany as an
experiment. It might succeed or it might fail. If it succeeded, in all probability
England would reap a large share of the reward by the opening up of fresh trade
routes. If, as was possible, it should fail, then at least something would have been
done by Germany, and whatever fruit there might be would then certainly be gathered
by England.
I then discussed with him a subject which, I said, seemed to me very desirable:
whether we could not come to some general arrangement embracing all the questions
which affect the two countries in South Africa and the Pacific.
I told him that I had no overture to make, that I was not authorised in any way
to discuss the subject, a portion of which relating to the islands in the Pacific, indeed,
it is proposed to examine by means of a Commission. That I thought that when two
Commissioners meet to discuss each separate subject, necessarily going into great
detail, there is almost inevitably a tendency towards a spirit of rivalry which renders
difficult a satisfactory settlement.
I had been turning the subject over in my mind, and that I thought I could
sketch out a scheme which would meet the wishes of both countries, and satisfy their
respective aspirations, and on his assurance that he would receive it in the same spirit,
as a perfectly unofficial and confidential communication between us as two friends and
not in our official capacities, I proceeded in the following manner.
I said that they, the Germans, were much hampered at Angra Pequena by our
possession of the islands. That those islands were as much British territory as the
Isle of Wight, or as Berlin is German soil, and it would be impossible for us to submit
a question of this kind to a Commission.
We, on the other hand, were hampered by our desire to meet Prince Bismarck's
wishes by taking as little of New Guinea as possible, and that, in consequence, we found
great inconvenience in having for the moment limited our Protectorate to the south
shore with the islands.
The lower part of New Guinea is very narrow, and at the lowest part it is only
19 miles broad. Therefore, the establishment of another Power, or of filibusters and
escaped convicts from New Caledonia, would be especially dangerous to the British
Protectorate. Half way up the coast is the Maclay territory, the natives of which
have specially asked for British protection, and if any portion of the north end (on
which it is believed there are no German traders established) is left unoccupied, the
result will be that it will become an Alsatia, in which all the crimes will be committed
which the Protectorate is designed to prevent.
The establishment of our Protectorate on the southern shore was only just in time to
stop a scheme, possessing exceptionally objectionable features, which was to be carried
out under the protection of a foreign flag.
Any arrangement which embraced the Pacific would have to be in some degree of
a tripartite nature, as France has claims and would have to be considered.
I thought that we should be free to extend our Protectorate to the whole or to as much as we thought proper, of New Guinea, eastward of the 141° of east longitude, including Rock Island, Long Island, the Louisiade Group as far as Rossel Island and Woodlark Island, with whatever contiguous islands may belong to New Guinea and are within, say, 20 or 25 miles of the coast.

Germany to take the sole charge, including, of course, sovereignty, of New Britain, New Ireland, Duke of York’s Island, and the other contiguous islands forming that group, and where there are some German trading ports already established; Germany, of course, recognising and protecting any English traders who may be there.

It would be necessary, to soothe the susceptibilities of Australia and New Zealand, that an assurance should be given that convicts would not be sent to the South Seas. Dr. Busch explained that, as regards Germany, she could not send any, there being no Imperial German convicts, each State in the Empire disposing of their own convicts.

I said that this being so it would be easy to set their minds at rest by giving such an undertaking.

There should also be a mutual agreement to repress outrages on natives in connexion with the labour traffic. I reminded Dr. Busch that it is in Germany’s interest to do what she properly can to conciliate Australasian sympathy in view of the trade relations she is cultivating in that part of the world and of her new subsidized steam lines.

Tonga and Samoa, with any other quasi-civilised islands [if such there are] to be internationalised in some manner, so as to remain free for the commercial enterprise of everybody. Probably the simplest plan would be an arrangement whereby the Powers interested should mutually agree to respect their independence.

I pointed out that this would give Germany perfect freedom to develop their commercial enterprise in Samoa should the German Parliament make the necessary appropriation.

France to be allowed to take the New Hebrides Group, which lie away from the others, and would naturally fall into the New Caledonian system.

Germany to undertake to respect and protect the rights of the lessee or lessees of the Angra Pequena Islands, or to purchase their rights; the lessee being placed in communication with the German Government for that purpose, and when a satisfactory arrangement is made in this respect, England to cede the islands to Germany.

Bageidah and Togo, &c., on the confines of the Gold Coast, have been taken by Germany, and we are content to have Germany as our neighbour. The strip of country is, however, very small, and is wedged in between English and French territories. If, therefore, at any time Germany should desire to quit that portion of the coast, she should undertake to give Great Britain the refusal of it before offering it to any other Power.

I said that I thought that this would make a general scheme satisfactory to both parties, that I had no power to offer it, but it was one which I could press on the acceptance of my Government, and though I did not expect him then and there to give a final opinion on its merits, if I could receive from him an assurance equally of an unofficial character that the scheme seems acceptable, I would at once endeavour to get the adhesion of my Government to it, and ask them to make the proposal officially.

He asked me to give him something in writing which should possess the same confidential and unofficial character as our conversation; and he would then let me know what reply he could make, but that, speaking generally and subject to consideration, he was disposed to think favourably of it, and that it was quite possible we might come to some satisfactory arrangement by means of this friendly talk.

December 7, 1884.

(Signed) R. H. MEADE.

Enclosure 2 in No. 2.

Mr. MEADE to Dr. BUSCH.

DEAR DR. BUSCH,

Hôtel Royal, Berlin, December 8, 1884.

At the interview you were good enough to give me on Sunday I promised to send you a Memorandum of the general scheme on which, in my opinion, a satisfactory
settlement could be made of all the questions in which our two Governments are jointly interested.

I am anxious to preserve as accurate a recollection as possible of our conversation, and therefore venture to ask you to glance over the accompanying Memorandum, which gives the substance of our talk, and also of the scheme which I suggested to you.

If I have omitted anything material in what you said, or have failed to catch your meaning correctly, I hope you will kindly tell me, and that you will treat this letter on the same confidential and unofficial form as our conversation.

In returning it, perhaps you may be able to tell me, confidentially, whether the scheme for the suggested settlement is one likely to commend itself to the acceptance of your Government, in which case I would earnestly press it on my Government, and it might then be made the subject of an official communication.

I have not been able to find in the shops here a satisfactory map, but I enclose a tracing which shows New Guinea and some of the islands with which I propose to deal.

Thanking you once more for the kindness with which you received me.

I remain, &c.

(Signed) R. H. MEADE.
His principle is to follow his traders when they establish themselves on territory under no civilized jurisdiction, and to afford them protection, not against competition by levying differential duties, but against direct aggression from without.

I told him that there was no difference in the commercial system of our Colonies under Crown Government, and I gave him as an example that, finding a few months ago a local law at the Gambia which restricted the navigation of that river to the flag of France only among foreign nations, we had at once directed its repeal, thus throwing open to all nations the freedom of the river, though we were assured that the old law was a dead letter, and never acted upon. That we did this because it was against our whole system to apply differential treatment.

I told him much that I had already said to Dr. Busch, as I found that the only part of my Memorandum which was shown to him was that relating to the suggested settlement as between England and Germany.

H.S.H. went back over the old ground as to our intrigues in the Cameroons, though to-day he referred to a new point, the supposed difficulty the Germans would be in by reason of the missionaries buying land behind them, and so, to use his own phrase, " girdling in the German Settlement and cutting them off from the interior."

I repeated the assurances given by Lord Granville, and I told him, as I had told Dr. Busch, of the object Mr. Baynes, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, had in coming to Berlin, and that I believed he had assured M. von Kusserow that their only desire was to carry on their work and to act hand in hand with the Germans, and by their influence with the natives to facilitate their rule, frankly accepting the new order of things. I added that they were not a trading society, and purely occupied themselves with their mission work.

I was also able to inform him that orders had actually been sent to all British authorities on the coast to co-operate with German officers, and to be careful to throw no difficulties in their way.

The Prince then again referred to our supposed desire to cramp their energies at Angra Pequeña.

He said that the coast was barren and of no value except as it gave access to the interior.

He produced a map and showed me the Kalahari desert, and said that he was informed that it was erroneously described as desert, that there are elephants there, trees, grass, and water. I told him that we were within our rights in taking over the Kalahari district, which merges into Bechuanaland, but that behind the coast line of Angra Pequeña was a waterless tract some 30 miles broad, but behind that again was a better country, and that Lord Granville had said that there was no desire to interfere with Damaraland or Namaqualand behind the coast line, and that there could be no objection from our point of view to Germany going into the interior even as far as the 20th degree of longitude, which I pointed out to him on his map, and beyond which westward we did not propose to go.

I told him that, encouraged by the conversation I had had with Dr. Busch, I had ventured to sketch out to him a plan, which was purely my own, made without the knowledge of Lord Granville, which I thought might form a basis on which our mutual relations in the Australasian waters might be satisfactorily adjusted.

Dr. Busch told me 10 days ago that he (the Prince) wished to discuss the matter with me himself, and I should be glad to hear his opinion on the subject.

Prince Bismark said that when it was first suggested to him he was disposed to think well of it, as he preferred a group of islands all to himself to being mixed up with other people on the mainland; that he had consulted the Association interested in that trade. He learned from them that the islands (the New Britain group) were of little value, but that the north coast was especially valuable. That his system was to follow trade, not to precede it; and when he found that German houses were established in a country under no foreign jurisdiction, to afford them the protection of the German flag. That some months past he had been urged to annex the north coast of New Guinea; that he had not precisely ordered the flag to be hoisted on this occasion, but that he had generally replied to the request for protection that, where German trade was established in a place where there is no foreign jurisdiction, he would afford support, and that, in consequence, the flag had been hoisted on the north coast of New Guinea, and on hearing from us that we had taken the south coast he considered that the action could not be open to any objection whatever.

I replied that I could not expect him to take my opinion on the relative value of these places, but, as a matter of fact, I could state that no German establishments were on the mainland, while several were on the islands, where, as I learn from his White
Book, there is only one English trader. As regards the north and south coasts, I could
only say that this was not the view I took of it, and I asked to be allowed to tell him
frankly how it struck me. I said that I was not a diplomatist, and I trusted to
the kindness with which he had received me to forgive me if I said anything which a trained
diplomatist would put differently.

I told him that the result of his hoisting the flag on New Guinea would have a
deplorable effect in Australia; that we had announced to him our intention to declare a
Protectorate up to a certain point in New Guinea, and that I considered that we were
entitled to rest assured that, pending our negotiations with him, Germany would not
take possession of the most important portion of the territory in question.

I told him that on the 19th September Mr. Scott wrote a note to Dr. Busch
announcing that Her Majesty's Government intended to establish a Protectorate over the
coast, together with the contiguous islands, with the exception of that portion of the
coast between the 145th degree of longitude and the eastern Dutch boundary.

On the 9th October Mr. Scott, in consequence of certain representations made in
London by Baron von Plessen, wrote that, as an act of courtesy, Her Majesty's Govern­
ment would, for the moment, limit the immediate declaration to the south coast and
islands, it being understood that this was done without prejudice to any territorial
question beyond that limit, adding that any question as to districts lying beyond the
limit actually taken should be dealt with, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government,
diplomatically rather than be referred to the South Sea Committee as suggested by
Baron von Plessen.

Having thus, from a feeling of courtesy, temporarily withdrawn from assuming the
Protectorate we had formally announced our intention of taking, we could never suppose
that Germany would, herself, annex a portion of the territory in question without waiting
for its suggested treatment, whether by means of the Committee or by the ordinary
diplomatic procedure.

Prince Bismarck told me that this correspondence was new to him; that he had no
recollection of seeing it, and that he had understood that he was free to take the north
shore, when we had limited our Protectorate to the south side.

I told him this was not the case. I gave him the dates of Mr. Scott's two notes, and
begged him to read them.

He then said that we had immense possessions in that part of the world, that we
already had more land than we could colonize for years to come, that our navy was
strong enough to protect those possessions, and that it was not worthy of us to grudge
Germany a Settlement on the coast of New Guinea, separated from Australia by
the islands and the south shore which we had taken.

I said that the population of our possessions in Australasia were now counted in
millions, and it was their fixed idea, however idle he might think it, that a foreign
establishment on the mainland of New Guinea would be a source of danger. I said that
Germany is interested in conciliating Australasian opinion, as she
would have taken it without the delay of more than a few hours, and that. Her Majesty's Government were satisfied then, in July 1883, that no such step wae contem­
plated by any foreign Power.

I explained that this Despatch stated that, if there had been any evidence of a foreign
Power intending to take possession of any part of New Guinea, Her Majesty's Govern­
ment would have taken it without the delay of more than a few hours, and that Her
Majesty's Government were satisfied then, in July 1883, that no such step was contem­
plated by any foreign Power.

The Prince then argued that this strip of New Guinea was very small, and of little value
to England. I said that it included the Maclay coast, in which we were specially
interested, and I asked him whether Germany would think of annexing land, with
or without value, which she had just proposed should form the subject of special
negotiation.
He seemed displeased at this question, and rather sharply replied that that sort of ques­
tion should be treated on general grounds of policy. Up to two years ago he had done
everything he could to facilitate English policy in Egypt and elsewhere, but for some
time past he has been treated in a different manner by England, whose actions do not
accord with her professions.

As for Samoa, it was all very well for me to propose that its independence should be
respected, but that was no concession to Germany,—she and the United States, equally
with England, had interests in that island.

With regard to Angra Pequena, he said that he attached no value to these islands.
He said that the guano would soon be exhausted, when they would become valueless. I
then showed him a map, which, at my request, Mr. Bolton had prepared for me, which
I told him showed the islands which I had suggested might be ceded under certain
conditions to Germany.

He interrupted me with the question, “Including Walfisch Bay?” To which
I replied, “Oh, no; that is a regular British Settlement on the mainland; I am
only proposing to deal with the islands.” I then showed him their position, remarking
that they were as much British territory as the soil on which Berlin stands is German
territory, and I thought it would be very inconvenient to Germany to have islands subject
to a foreign jurisdiction close to her new territory, and some lying in the very mouth of
the principal harbour.

Prince Bismarck said he had considered this and attached no importance to it, he made
no alternative proposal, and he wound up by saying, “I do not find your proposals
sufficient.”

I expressed my regret that this was so, saying that I was in the painful position of
falling between two stools, as he rejected my scheme, and I had not in any way been
authorised by my own Government to propose it.

With this my visit terminated.

R. M.

Berlin, December 24, 1884.

Enclosure 2 in No. 4.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. Meade.

After my visit to Prince Bismarck I thought that it would be useful if I went to see
Dr. Busch, and explain to him the view I had expressed to Prince Bismarck of the
correspondence which had passed between our two Governments.

Dr. Busch began by explaining to me that he was desirous of assuring me that when
he saw me he was not aware of the orders given, or that the German flag was in fact
already hoisted on the north coast of New Guinea; that he was only imperfectly informed
on the subject, but he was anxious to remove from my mind any feeling that he had
acted unfairly.

I entirely accepted his assurances, and went on to tell him what I had told the
Chancellor, and especially what I had said respecting our two notes of the 19th September* and
the 9th October,† on which I contended we had not been fairly treated, and that, as
Prince Bismarck would speak to him, I wanted to make my point quite clear to him.
He then sent for M. de Kusserow, as being thoroughly conversant with the matter, and
I found that they put an interpretation on these communications of a wholly different
character.

They look upon our second note as a final withdrawal from any claim to go to
the northward of the limit we then fixed; and that the question to be diplomatically
treated was, not whether we should ultimately go further up the coast, but merely how
far inland towards the interior from the south coast.

M. de Kusserow reminded me that, when a question was asked in Parliament as to
our limits inland, the reply was that it would depend on local requirements, and would
be decided later; and this was the question, in their view, which was left open for diplo­
matic treatment.

I altogether denied this, and I begged them, before seeing the Chancellor, to look
at the two notes from the British Embassy and at the communication‡ made by Baron
von Plessen, and they would see that the two notes hung together, that the interior

* See Enclosure in No. 14 in [C.—4273] February 1885.
† See Enclosure in No. 16 in [C.—4273] February 1885.
‡ See Enclosure in No. 15 in [C.—4273] February 1885.

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limits were in no way referred to, and that the sole question to be diplomatically considered, or referred to the Committee, was how far up the coast we should go beyond our temporary limits.

They told me that in July or August of this year Count Münster was ordered to tell us that a German expedition was going to the north coast of New Guinea, and that they were apprehensive of the jealousy of the Australian Colonies, who had actually recommended that everything in that quarter of the Globe not already British territory should be at once annexed.

Later, Count Münster was desired to leave an aide-mémoire with Lord Granville, so that their intentions might be clearly made known.

We had therefore full warning, they said, that this expedition was about to be made. It is being carried out by the same Association—something like our own East India Company—as that which some years ago would have undertaken a similar task in Samoa, and was only prevented by the refusal of the German Parliament to vote the necessary funds. M. de Kusserow supposed that they had gone to an expense of 1,000,000 (marks?) in fitting out this expedition.

I pointed out on the map the part of our proposed Protectorate they had taken, viz., from the 145th degree of longitude southwards as far as the Gulf of Huon. He asked me if that was the southern point they had taken. I said that I understood that the German flag has been hoisted on three points between longitude 141° and the Gulf of Huon. *

He replied that the orders given were that this trading association should be recognised and the protection of the German flag accorded to it if they established themselves at any point between the Dutch limit, 141st degree of longitude, and East Cape, which is our limit on the southern coast.

This expedition, I gathered, sailed (I presume from some Australian port) in July or August, I think the latter. The name of the principal person in it is Finsch, which I said sounded like an English name. I was told, however, that he is a German from Silesia.

As regards New Guinea, therefore, their case may shortly be summed up that they had duly warned us that an expedition was going to New Guinea; that they had always contended that the north coast should be open to them; that they looked on the limits of our Protectorate on the south coast as finally settled by Mr. Scott's note of the 9th October; and that the only question remaining open was how far the limits of our Protectorate inland should extend, so as not to clash with theirs on the opposite coast.

I asked whether further annexations were contemplated in the South Seas, or whether I might rest assured that nothing would be done now, in Samoa, for instance, pending the discussion of these questions by the proposed Committee. I reminded them that so far as I was aware Lord Granville had received no reply to his offer of assurances to respect Samoa if Prince Bismarck would give reciprocal assurances. They replied that we might safely assume that nothing would be done by them in the South Seas pending the deliberations of the Committee.

I took back the Memorandum which I had given Dr. Busch, confidentially, detailing our conversation of the 7th, regretting that it should have come to nothing, and I asked them to do two things. To read the two notes of the 19th September and 9th October, together with Baron von Plessen's communication, and to let me know whether it did not bear out the construction I put upon it; and secondly, whether it was too late for any arrangement to be made by which we could go to the 145th degree of longitude, and I remarked that there need be no difficulty on the score of the Association, which is said to have established itself within this territory, as we could undertake their protection.

They said that, having promised the protection of the German flag, they did not think it would be possible to withdraw it.

They asked if I was remaining in Berlin, and I said that if I could see any chance of a settlement, and of being useful, I would willingly stay for any length of time, and that I would not, therefore, now leave Berlin. They finally said that they would communicate with me again when they had looked up the subject and spoken to the Chancellor.

Berlin, 24th December 1884.

R. M.

* See telegram to Admiralty, Enclosure in No. 72 in [G.—4273.] of February 1885.
No. 5.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL GRANVILLE, K.G., to SIR E. MALET, K.C.B.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 29, 1884.

From Mr. Meade’s memorandum of his recent conversation with Dr. Busch and M. Von Kusserow, of the German Foreign Office, enclosed in your Despatch, Confidential, of the 24th instant, it appears that they stated that in July or August of this year Count Münster was ordered to inform Her Majesty’s Government that a German expedition was going to the North Coast of New Guinea, and that later his Excellency was desired to leave an aide mémoire with me on the subject.

I have to acquaint your Excellency that no aide mémoire on the subject of the islands in the South Pacific has been given to me by Count Münster.

He communicated to me, on the 8th August, the substance of one which he had received from Berlin, and you will find it recorded, together with the terms of my reply, in my Despatch to the late Lord Ampthill of the 9th August.

I submitted the draft of this Despatch to Count Münster, who agreed with me that it contained a correct report of our conversation upon the occasion in question.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

* No. 4. † Enclosure in No. 5 of C.—4273 of February 1885.