

Translation

No. 54.

Antananarivo

20 May 1884.

Sir,

In the present state of political & affairs in Her Majesty's Dominions of Madagascar, I desire to communicate with you on questions that concern most vitally the threatened integrity of this Dominion, as well as the interests of the United States, which, under our recent Treaty of amity and commerce with your Government, are hazarded by the present attitude of affairs.

In communications addressed to His Excellency the President, by Her Majesty Ranavalona III. and by myself, there has been set forth the needs and necessities of this Government, and the requests for the advice and

To

The Honorable
Frederick T. Frelinghuysen
Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

and assistance of the United States in this time of our national troubles.

In this communication it is my wish to call briefly to your attention the plain causes that have inaugurated our present difficulties, the effect this position has upon commercial relations of the United States, the recent Treaty rights endangered, and other questions of great importance to the Government of the United States, and that of Her Majesty.

Our present isolation from the World's affairs has taught us its lesson in that lack of sympathy, or interest, which the cause of an infant nation just emerging into the light of civilization should justly excite among its older and more advanced neighbors. The great mass of Her Majesty's subjects are still untaught in the ways of diplomacy, and are ignorant of the results of political entanglement and intrigue. It is impossible for them to understand, who are still young to the benefits of a religion, and

and a progress so antagonistic to the teachings of their ancestors, the justice of any cause which should excite the hostility of a power grown old in such a civilization. The leaders of Reform in Madagascar, the believers in progress, had no easy task before them, even if our present difficulties had not complicated the opposition of their antagonists.

What more disheartening picture to the firm believers in the destiny of our race could be presented than that of Her Majesty's Dominions whose laws have been violated, whose flag has been fired upon, and whose just appeals have been unlistened to by those nations whose civilization we wish to learn from.

I desire to refer briefly and plainly to those causes, that have placed Her Majesty's Dominions in this present difficult position.

Madagascar was first visited by the Portuguese in 1506, who had for some time, a small settlement in the
Island.

Island. In 1595 and 1598 a number of Dutch colonists settled at Antongil Bay on the East Coast. In 1643 the French made their first settlement at St. Lucia and Fort Dauphin, but ~~---~~ previous to this, the English had formed a colony in the south-west coast. The French abandoned their settlement in 1672, and not until 1745 did they establish themselves at St. Mary, a small Island on the East Coast and at Foule Point on the same coast. In 1876 the French withdrew entirely from the mainland of Madagascar. In 1810 the English captured the Islands of Mauritius and Bourbon and their dependencies, and on the 25th of May, 1816, the Governor of Mauritius took formal possession of Madagascar in the name of the British Crown. In 1817 all rights possessed by Great Britain were ceded to Radama I., with whom they made a Treaty of Friendship and commerce, and ensured the abolition of the export slave-trade.

trade. Radama I. conquered the Sakalava tribes of the northwest, and at the close of His reign there was not a single tribe in Madagascar that had not submitted to His power. Such is a brief history of the French connection with Madagascar up to the date of 1817.

These difficulties can be generally divided into three heads - I. The Laborde difficulty; II The Dhow "Foale" affair; III. The claims to the protectorate by France on the North-west portion of Her Majesty's dominions. Out of these three have given all the recent complications, and the present threatened absorption or dismemberment of Madagascar.

It is unnecessary to call to your attention before taking up the discussion of the first of these causes, that it is a law of this country that no land can be actually sold to foreigners of any nationality; but they are permitted by treaty to lease, or rent lands, houses, or storehouses, for any length of

of

of time not exceeding twenty-five years &c,
 (vide Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Com-
 merce between America and Madagascar
 Article III, section I, and Article V amending
 Treaty with Great Britain of the 27th
 June 1865 and with other Powers).

I. The Mr. Laborde difficulty. - In 1835, a
 certain Mr. Laborde, a shipwrecked French
 Sailor, was brought to this Capital, and
 in order to gain his liberty agreed to
 teach the people certain arts with which
 he was well acquainted. By his efforts
 he gradually gained much influence &
 and popularity with the Government &
 and people, and was, by the former given
 as a reward for life, three pieces of property -
 one in the vicinity of the capital; one in the
 country at Mantasoa, where he established
 an iron foundry for the manufacture
 of guns, &c; and the third, the residence
 in the capital, afterwards used by him,
 in his appointment as Consul for
 France, as the French Consulate. Mr.
 Laborde became a Malagasy citizen
 then. He died in 1878, leaving as his
 heir a certain Mr. Campan, his nephew,
 and

and who had occupied the post of Chancellor and Secretary of the Consulate. Mr. Laborde was succeeded, in 1880, by Mr. Cassas as French Consul, Mr. Campau claims, not only the houses, but the land upon which they stand. The houses we consider by Law to belong to the legatee; the right to the land we deny, as already stated, no land can belong to a foreigner in fee simple. Mr. Meyer, in whose turn of office occurred the Dhow "Toale" affair to which I shall refer succeeded Mr. Cassas in 1884, and was in turn succeeded by Mr. Baudais.

II. The Dhow "Toale" Difficulty. A short distance down the coast from Bemba-toka Bay, west coast of Madagascar are four Sakalava chiefs which were at this time at war with each other. Of these Baly, Soalala and Boina had made an attack upon Marambitsy. A Dhow the "Toale" from Mayotte one of the common Island seized by the French, conveyed arms and ammunition under the French flag to these Marambitsy people, but was discovered by a party—

party landing her cargo. A fight naturally ensued and several of the Arabs were killed, as also several subjects of Madagascar. For this so-called outrage we have been forced to pay an indemnity to the French of 9,740 dollars. Though this affair showed clearly that the local chiefs were loyal to the Hova Government, and that the French recognized the Hova control over the very district they are now claiming.

III. The claims by France over the North West territory. The entire claims made by France over the Northwestern portion of Her Majesty's Dominions (extending from 16 parallel upwards) rests upon a treaty they alleged to be made by them with a certain Tsimiharo, chief of Antakarana who being defeated by the Hova troops in the time of Radama I. took refuge in the Island of Nosibe, and called in the French to protect him. For some years the French did so but they at length carried Tsimiharo and his brother

brother to Reunion with the threat —
 that unless he so accompanied them
 and made a treaty in their behalf
 they would leave him to his fate —
 Tsimiharo wished to consult with
 his subjects in the mainland, but this
 was refused. On arrival in Reunion
 he made a treaty ceding Nosibe to
 the French in condition of enjoying
 the protection of the French and recei-
 ving £20 a month. When Tsimiharo
 returned to his own land and told his
 subjects, they were indignant but it
 was too late. On these grounds the French
 now claim protectorate over the North
 west territory of Her Majesty's
 Dominions. From 1841, thus Nosibe
 has remained in the hands of the
 French, but from that date until 1882
 no attempt has ever been made to enforce
 to so-called claim of the French to
 the mainland, and Her Majesty's
 Government has always strenuously
 resisted any and all such claims by
 foreigners at possession and righteously,
 and firmly deny the right of any
 rebellious

rebellious tribe to alienate any part
 of Her Majesty's Dominions to a
 foreign Power. In 1868 a Treaty of
 Friendship and Commerce was made
 with France, wherein no reference was
 made to any such alleged French claims,
 either on the east or west coasts of Madaga-
 scar; in it further the Sovereign was
 styled Queen of Madagascar and for
 many years the custom dues were re-
 gularly paid by French vessels as
 well as those of the other nations to
 Her Majesty's Custom-house officers
 in the north west territory, now claimed
 by the French. In 1862 a French
 Company commonly known as the
 "Lambert Company" succeeded in indu-
 cing the Young King Radama II to
 sign a charter by which enormous
 concessions were made, giving the
 French rights to occupy rivers, ports,
 forests, mines, etc. actually giving to
 them everything worth having in
 Madagascar. This agreement was
 bitterly opposed by the leading minds
 in Madagascar and its concession
 was.

was one of the leading causes of the revolution that deprived Radama II his crown and his life.

This charter was promptly repudiated by his successor and after much difficulty the French Company abandoned its claims on the payment by the Malagasy of 1,200,000 francs. In both documents Radama II was styled "King of Madagascar". There can be no doubt that the French Trading Company has not a little to do with the revival of French claim in Madagascar.

American and English trade is by far the largest in the Island, and vigorous attacks are made upon it by the French.

The results that have so rapidly followed the lawful attempts on the part of Her Majesty to establish her just Dominions over the whole Island, the planting of the Malagasy flags presented to the Sakalava Embassy on their territory of the north west, and their hauling down by the commander of the French frigate "Porfait"; the embargo

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embargo of the Malagasy vessel "Antananarivo" due to the same cause, the detention in the departure of Her Majesty's Ambassadors to Europe and the United States, and the bombardment of our principal sea-ports; the laying waste of our coasts, and the precipitation of all the horrors of war on a once peaceful and happy people, all these are already known to you.

I desire to call, Mr. Secretary, your attention to the direct reflection and disastrous results to the commerce and influence of the United States in these distant seas by the action of the French Republic.

The commerce with Madagascar in American manufactures: upwards of \$3,000,000 a year. In cotton goods, cutlery, and in all the miscellaneous articles of household use, American goods stand in the unquestioned first place. This commerce has grown from about \$400,000 in 1879, to its present proportion and will certainly develop

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develope to about ten times its volume in a brief period, if we are enabled to carry out our wishes, and our pledges to your Government.

Of all the vast number of articles manufactured in America there is scarcely one that would not be eagerly purchased here if seen, once brought to the notice of our people, the desire for possession is eager and earnest and it is now known throughout our land that in the products of the soils lies a ready means of exchange. Habits of industry are thus encouraged and each forward step of commerce creates wants, fosters thrift, and educates our people by contact with civilization and points to vast commercial relations between our Governments that are full of promise.

To our great regret and to the great loss to your citizens who are engaged in trade here, the present difficulty with a foreign Power has come upon us in spite of our most strenuous efforts to avoid it. This trouble is

is most damaging to your countrymen here; threatens the dismemberment of our country and prevents our Government from extending that assistance towards developing the dormant resources of our kingdom which it is our earnest wish to afford to your energetic countrymen. Thus have I attempted to place before you the plain facts in the present critical condition of Her Majesty's Dominions in Madagascar, the threatened destruction of your commercial relations and the impossibility of Her Majesty carrying out, as She desires, the enlightened and liberal Treaty recently contracted with the Government of the United States.

Practically can the United States look with indifference upon the loss of this stronghold of trade in the East or can, She as the exponent of progress and enlightenment fail to sympathize with a people who look upon her as her great friend and example. Her Majesty and myself in a contrary

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contrary hope have thus appealed to
Your Government to justly settle
our difficulties, and arrange these
differences.

I call to your attention the
enclosed printed copies of correspondance
and reports on the negotiations bet-
ween the French Representatives in
Madagascar, and Our Authorities.

May God bless you, Sir,

Saith your friend
(signed) Rainilaiarivony

Prime Minister.