

### WHAT A NATURAL GROWTH SHOWS

It is not often that consular reports furnish information of thrilling interest, but in times when war or annexation is a current topic, their ordinary dullness seems to vanish. At this particular time, when the retiring president is trying to rush the annexation of Hawaii through in order to secure a bit of personal glory, a consular report from the South sea port of Tahiti bristles with pertinent facts.

As studious people look into the Hawaiian question, they find that it requires more than a fortnight's thought. When they look up the figures showing the growth of American trade in all of the South Sea possessions, they wonder whether this country would gain anything at all by the absolute annexation of every coral reef and bit of fertile soil in Oceania. As the western cities grow and as our coast, railroad and shipping facilities improve, an already wonderful trade growth prospers almost beyond the belief of anyone who has not made a careful investigation of the subject.

The little French holding of Tahiti is scarcely larger than a county in Missouri, yet its trade reaches respectable proportions. Tahiti passed under the protection of France in 1842. In 1880 the island and its small connections were annexed to France and became a colony of the second class in the French republic. Here it is interesting to note that the deposed native ruler of Tahiti is allowed a pension of \$12,000 a year by a government that has always paid exorbitant salaries; yet Mr. Harrison proposes that this government, whose official salaries are comparatively small, should grant Liliuokalani an annuity of \$20,000, besides a large cash payment immediately upon the assumption of American authority.

Tables are usually uninteresting, but this one, sent in to the United States government

by Consul Doty at Tahiti, is eloquent in every line. Mr. Doty says:

The exports for all countries during the year 1891 amounted to \$807,481, an increase of \$203,439 over 1890. These are the largest exports ever realized for Tahiti, and it is an interesting fact that \$321,938 went to the United States, as will be seen by the following table:

Country.	1890.	1889.	1890.	1891.
United States.....	\$ 107,276	\$ 192,431	\$ 251,532	\$ 321,938
France.....	102,456	94,690	42,186	65,245
Great Britain.....	91,890	190,280	154,891	74,577
Germany.....	31,518	58,278	.....	51,360

Clamoring, ignorant annexationists will please note that France, although it owns Tahiti as a colony, has almost steadily lost trade there. All other nations have lost trade, while the United States, one in 100 of whose population could not tell in what quarter of the globe Tahiti lies, has forged ahead in a remarkable degree. This country's exports to that little colony are also quite wonderful as to growth, as the following table from Mr. Doty's little report shows:

Country.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.
U. S.....	\$365,945.60	\$319,394.40	\$384,504.00	
France.....	100,860.00	55,433.60	90,326.40	Not
Great B....	95,531.40	92,591.60	118,814.40	appor-
Germany....	.....	12,744.80	24,542.40	tioned
Other.....	8,933.60	1,350.00	25,701.00	
Total ...	\$571,213.60	\$479,424.40	\$643,891.20	\$629,841.00

The only known reason for the annexation of Hawaii, as THE TIMES has remarked before now, is its strategic value. There seem to be a dozen reasons against the move. It may be that all of them will vanish with a careful investigation. Surely that investigation ought to be made before we saddle ourselves with a mixed population of factional people, lazy and for the great part uneducated.

As sure as our commerce and our west grow, we will eventually secure all of the trade in Oceania. It is as natural for the islands of the southern Pacific to trade with us as it is for northern Africa to trade with Mediterranean ports. Tahiti is much further from us than Honolulu; it lies far below the equator. To the northwestward the Samoan, Gilbert, Fiji, Marshall and Ladrone groups lie, all of them natural trade territory of the United States. All of these islands may sooner or later ask for the protection of this government, even annexation, may be, but unless there is another jingo president in the saddle they will ask in vain. We have their trade and, unless their strategic importance is paramount, we want nothing else of them.

Mr. Harrison owes an explanation to the American people for his undue haste in the Hawaiian matter. The people do not need the explanation, however, to have an understanding of the motives of the little man from Indiana.