

entrance is so distinctly marked by the north-east end of Ambrym, and is so easy of access that in the prevailing wind (south-east) you can 'ay straight into it, and when once within the heads you are perfectly secure, and can anchor immediately, being sheltered from the swell by the reef off the south head, and with excellent holding ground; then, on going further up the harbor, you find yourself perfectly land-locked, and it would, in my opinion, require a very strong hurricane to make itself felt.

There is a continual supply of fresh water. An excellent beacon for the entrance to Port Sandwich is formed by the volcano on the neighboring island of Ambrym, which is nearly always in action. This port has always been a peaceful place, and although many massacres have taken place from time to time on this island, the natives at this particular place have never been guilty of any outrages. There are two stores here, one belonging to the New Hebrides Company, and the other belonging to Mr. Howard Walker, of Noumea.

The importance of this position cannot be overestimated, as, owing to its proximity to the most fertile islands of the group—viz., Oba and Ambrym—and its own natural products of coco-nuts, ivory nuts, and beche-de-mer, it would be invaluable as a head station to work from.

WHAT IS THOUGHT IN AUSTRALIA.

The New South Wales correspondent of the *London Times* writes on the subject as follows: "We have had no further intelligence from the New Hebrides as to the French occupation except the fact that 50 of the soldiers are down with the fever, and that the man-of-war, *Dives*, had left with additional material and stores. This does not look as if the local Government contemplated the immediate withdrawal of the troops. At the same time they are not of the slightest use for the purpose for which they have been professedly sent, because they are located in two places where there have never been any massacres, viz., at Havannah Harbor and Port Sandwich. If at these two places there are no French settlers to protect there are at least two fine harbours to secure. Neither the press nor the people of Noumea indulge in any pretences about the need of protecting French settlers. They look upon the occupation as a *fait*

accompli and as tantamount to annexation.

They deny the right of the Australians to complain of it, and contend that the honor of France is involved in keeping possession. A petition to the Governor has been largely signed which takes this view without any circumlocution or disguise. It recognizes that the flag has been hoisted, protests against any retreat as a death blow to French influence in the Pacific, denies that any nation can legitimately contest the right of France, and argues that the Government at Paris ought as legitimately to heed the voice of its colonists as that of London should heed the voice of the Australians. Of course the petition makes no allusion to the agreement between France and Britain that neither of them shall take the New Hebrides.

Dr. Steele, the representative in Sydney, of the Presbyterian Missions, has, in view of the French occupation, petitioned the Premier to request the Admiral to protect the missionaries and their property. Sir Patrick Jennings has replied that he has no power to control the Admiral, and that so far as he at present knows, nothing has been done at the New Hebrides which warrants the assumption that the missionaries need any additional protection. As our Premier is a Roman Catholic he, of course, lies under the suspicion of wishing to kill Protestant Missions."

In addition to the above, a despatch from Melbourne, states that the Rev. W. McDonald of Havannah Harbor, in the Island of Efate, on the other side of which our own Missionary, Rev. J. W. McKenzie, is stationed, has written a letter to Lieutenant Marx of the British gunboat *Swinger*, stating that the French Hebrides Company have seized the lands of the native Christian mission, alleging prior title, and that the French commandant threatened the natives with armed force if they resisted. The company also claims lands of other British subjects. Mr. McDonald asserts that the French practically exercise sovereignty over two islands. Threats have been made against Mr. Macdonald and native Christians, and he demands assistance from the English squadron. The Premiers of the Australian colonies are about to hold a conference to consider the situation.

A still later despatch from the South Seas, from Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia, dated Sep. 3rd, states that the