

was but too much reason to fear were fomented by white residents, and which it was thought the presence of a Deputy Commissioner would do much to terminate. It was found to be impossible to procure a vessel for his conveyance to the island, and, the Protestant party having obtained a complete ascendancy, peace was for the moment restored. It was, however, generally felt by the people that the continuance of tranquillity thus temporarily established was most precarious, and in 1879 they petitioned for annexation to Great Britain. A Deputy Commissioner, Mr. A. Gordon, who was sent to the island, received a confirmation of this petition at a general meeting of the inhabitants of the island, and its affairs were from that time administered through the agency of a Council of Chiefs, acting under the advice of the Deputy Commissioner, until its formal annexation to the Colony of Fiji took place in 1881.

40. In 1881, Mr. H. H. Romilly was appointed a Deputy Commissioner, with instructions to visit New Britain, New Ireland, and the northern coast of New Guinea.

41. We have appended to our report specimens of the instructions given to the Deputy Commissioners.

42. In the Friendly Islands and in Samoa, where Deputy Commissioners habitually reside, the operation of the Order in Council may be said to have been very fairly successful.

43. Before 1877, disputes between whites themselves and between whites and natives were of frequent occurrence, and gave rise not uncommonly to discreditable affrays, and in one instance, in Samoa, to the execution of a man by lynch-law. Since the Order in Council has been in force, such disputes as have arisen have been for the most part promptly and satisfactorily settled, and that, in the majority of cases, by arbitration, without ever coming before the Court at all, but with the knowledge that it could be, and would be, resorted to in case of need. There has been no recurrence of the discreditable scenes above referred to.

44. But Tonga and Samoa are only very small groups, not in any way comparable as to size or population with most of those enumerated as within the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner, and certainly not so likely as many other localities to be the scene of illegal proceedings on the part of British subjects; and we are compelled to add that, as regards the greater part of the vast area to which the Order in Council refers, its provisions have been almost wholly inoperative, and in some respects have perhaps produced results mischievous rather than beneficial.

45. Some few, though but very few, offenders have been detected, and a yet smaller number have been arrested and punished. In a larger number of cases misdeeds have been brought to light, and, though no punishment has followed, it may be admitted that the greater probability of exposure has caused more care and circumspection on the part of those likely to offend.

46. Nevertheless, the Order in Council is, as regards the greater part of the Pacific, practically powerless for good, while its provisions have laid restraints on the action of Her Majesty's naval force which did not previously exist.

47. Several causes have combined to produce this result, and it will be worth while to dwell in some detail on the circumstances which have paralysed the action of a machinery so elaborate, and a force apparently so imposing. The most evident and immediate cause for this failure is the inadequacy of the staff by which it is attempted to carry on the administration of the Orders in Council.

48. The groups of islands above enumerated extend over an area stretching at least 3,500 miles from east to west, and 2,500 miles from north to south. But until the present year no resident Deputy Commissioners had been appointed except to the Tongan and Samoan groups, which lie in close proximity to each other, and within 400 and 600 miles respectively of the head-quarters of the High Commissioner in Fiji, and where, although the presence of a Deputy Commissioner is no doubt very useful, the particular abuses which it was supposed it would be their more special duty to check are entirely unknown. In Tonga there is no labour traffic whatever, either outwards or inwards. Labourers are, indeed, to some extent imported into Samoa, but they are so almost exclusively by Germans and in German vessels, over which, of course, the Deputy Commissioner has no control.

49. The inadequacy of the staff is due to the insufficiency of the funds devoted to the maintenance of the High Commission.

50. In 1877, a sum of £5,000 was voted by Parliament to meet these expenses. It chanced that, owing to various circumstances, especially the facts that the Order did not come into operation until February, 1878, and that the High Commissioner was absent from the Pacific for the whole of that year after the 25th June, only £3,000 was spent on the Commission in the year 1878; and the Treasury thereupon came to the conclusion that £3,000 annually was a sufficient sum to meet its expenses for all time to come.

51. The larger vote of £5,000 has lately been restored to the estimates, and an additional Deputy Commissioner appointed, who is to reside permanently in the islands to the north-west of Fiji; but as yet no one has so resided.

52. The operation of the Order in Council has also been hampered by the union of the offices of Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner. We are not now inquiring whether any other arrangement is practicable or desirable, but we hold it to be impossible not to perceive that the movements of the High Commissioner are necessarily restricted by his duties as Governor; and, in point of fact, although he has occasionally gone to Samoa and Tonga, the High Commissioner has never made those personal visits to the more distant islands which are clearly contemplated by the Order in Council, which are in the highest degree desirable, and which were frequently projected by himself.

53. But, even if the staff were more numerous and efficient, it would not in all cases be easy to carry out the provisions of the Order in Council. They were framed, no doubt, with ability and clearness, but by men who had not fully grasped conditions of life essentially different from those to which they were themselves accustomed. For instance, the month's notice required by Article 155 (in itself a very proper formality and check) renders it practically impossible to take proceed-