

for records he must have, and the question for consideration is where they should be located. The objection to placing it on one of the islands is their general unhealthiness as a permanent residence. On the whole, however, we are inclined to think that the best arrangement would be that the High Commissioner's head-quarters should be at a point in the Western Pacific Islands, but that he should be permitted to absent himself and seek a more favourable climate during the most sickly months. Traders, missionaries, and men-of-war all leave the islands, if possible, at that period, and it would be hard to place Her Majesty's Civil servants in a worse position, through a pedantic adherence to official rules framed to meet a totally different condition of things.

109. But for recent events, we should have recommended Havannah Harbour, or Ugi, as the High Commissioner's recognized official place of residence, but we now have no hesitation in thinking that it should be, at all events for the present, in New Guinea. It is in New Guinea that the necessity for prompt action on his part is most likely to arise, and it is in New Guinea that the largest gatherings of British subjects are likely to be found not under the control of any organized Government.

110. But, as regards the greater part of the Pacific, the High Commissioner must chiefly act through his deputies. It is, we think, indispensably necessary that their number should be increased, and that they should be chiefly resident in the islands.

111. The visits of men-of-war, though unquestionably of great utility, are of too temporary a nature to effect much lasting good, either as regards the suppression of abuses on the part of white men or establishment of better things among the natives themselves. The captain of a man-of-war has no local knowledge or experience, and, however able, must be almost wholly dependent for information and interpretation upon those whose complaints he has to investigate, and who can do much to prevent any counter-complaint from native sources reaching him.

112. The Deputy Commissioners should, we think, be men of intelligence and activity, to each of whom a particular district should be assigned, and who should receive a salary of from £450 to £550 per annum, and whose stations should in the first instance be as follows:—

		Head-quarters.
1. South New Guinea	...	Port Moresby.
2. Northern New Guinea, New Britain, and New Ireland	...	Duke of York Island.
3. New Hebrides	...	Havannah Harbour.
4. South Solomons and Santa Cruz Group	...	Marau Sound.
5. North Solomons and Admiralty Group	...	Rubiana.

113. By the 10th and 11th articles of the Order in Council the appointment of Deputy Commissioners is vested in the High Commissioner, and we regard it as of the utmost importance that this should be not only nominally but practically the case. The selection at home, from time to time, of a promising young man as a Deputy Commissioner may be a great assistance to the High Commissioner, but, if local applications for employment in this capacity are listened to by the Secretary of State, either because they are themselves plausibly worded or are recommended by some influential colonist, we fear that the efficiency of the work done will be much impaired, and probably much heavier expense ultimately incurred than would otherwise be requisite.

114. Each Deputy Commissioner should be provided with a boat of size sufficient to enable him to undertake a moderate voyage; but, to enable the High Commissioner fully to perform his duties, and the Deputy Commissioners to visit the different islands of their district, a vessel of larger size is required. A ship-of-war cannot always be obtained for the use of the High Commissioner, and, even if obtained, may not arrive until it is too late for her presence to be useful. A striking example of the necessity for a vessel at the disposal of the High Commissioner is afforded by what took place during the war between the Roman Catholics and Protestants of Rotumah in 1878. That contest might probably have been terminated without serious bloodshed, and the subsequent annexation perhaps rendered unnecessary, had the High Commissioner been able to command the services of a vessel to convey the Deputy Commissioner. As it was, nothing was available for the purpose but a mission schooner, the use of which, though promised in the first instance, it was subsequently found impossible to obtain.

115. Great delay is caused by the necessity for preliminary communication with the Commdore, even when he is able to comply with the High Commissioner's request; but the ships on the Australian station are not more in number than is sufficient to do their own work, and they cannot with convenience be often or for long periods diverted to the special use of the High Commission.

116. The necessity for such a vessel as is here referred to was fully admitted by Her Majesty's Government so long ago as 1879, when the yacht "Cruiser" was purchased for the purpose. Difficulties were, however, raised as to the contribution to be made by the Colony of Fiji towards the purchase and maintenance of this vessel, and, when she finally left Plymouth Sound in the month of November, 1882, it was as H.M.S. "Dart," and as a species of tender to the flagship on the Australian station.

117. The powers possessed by the High Commissioner with respect to the issue of regulations for the government of British subjects in the Pacific are already extensive, but we think they should be made yet more so, especially as regards their enforcement, and should comprehend those which it was the intention of the Government of 1832 to confer upon the Governor of New South Wales. We think, too, that some provision might perhaps be made for raising from British subjects resident in the Pacific some portion of the funds required for the maintenance of law and order, and for associating with the High Commissioner certain officials and leading residents among the islands, who might form a council empowered to levy taxation for such purposes, within moderate limits.

II.—*Ordinary Administration of Justice.*

118. Except as regards the simplification of the somewhat cumbrous forms referred to in another part of this report, we are not prepared to recommend any very considerable modifications