

The complaint against the ship "Windward Ho" was that her master, Sonnichsen, had recruited a number of boys under ten years of age at Pentecost Island, and "traded for these boys with firearms." The charge was proved, and the master fined £20 for breach of the regulations issued by the High Commissioner.

The ship "Windward Ho" formerly belonged to Fiji, but in the year 1885 was sold in Sydney, New South Wales, to Mr. Donald McLeod. I find, from a report furnished to Governor Lord Carrington by the President of the Marine Board of that colony, dated the 11th June, 1890, that a license "to continue to employ twenty-five native labourers for the purpose of procuring *bêche-de-mer* and pearl-shell," was granted on the application of Mr. Donald McLeod from Noumea, New Caledonia (but his actual residence for many years has been at Havannah Harbour, Sandwich Islands), with Mr. D. M. Stewart, of Sydney, as surety.

The President observes, "The points taken by Captain Davis, of H.M.S. 'Royalist,' about the condition in which the vessel's papers were found to be, are certainly valid, and no doubt in antagonism to the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act; but we have no means of checking this sort of thing after a vessel clears from our port and is engaged in cruising among the South Sea islands." I am unable to say who Mr. D. M. Stewart, of Sydney, is, but, without raising the doubt as to the value, in any sense, of his security, I think, having regard to the fact that Donald McLeod was neither a resident of New South Wales nor a resident within the jurisdiction of any civilised State, and that his character could have been ascertained by reference to the Admiral commanding the station, that it is to be regretted that a license was issued to him.

There are no satisfactory means of controlling the actions of men like McLeod, who are adepts at evasion, and who place their ships occasionally and nominally under the French or American flag. They are not fit men to be licensed under the Acts already quoted.

For some time past the Governors of New South Wales and Victoria have furnished me with copies of all licenses granted by them, and I have found such copies of much use in watching the movements of ships in these seas. I transmit one of the last of such copies from New South Wales, which was no doubt submitted to the Governor in the ordinary way. In this case a license was granted to one Reinhold Frederic Erickson, master of the schooner "Myrtle," of 12 tons register only. The chief officer of this vessel was John Olson; the number of the crew was two (whether natives or white men it is not apparent from the license). The name of the "Myrtle" is not to be found on the list of registered British shipping. She would not, I believe, be registered in New South Wales, but only licensed to sail coastwise. She is, in fact, a big boat, and nothing more. I can hardly think that the provisions of the Pacific Islanders' Protection Acts, 1872 and 1875, in respect of licenses, were intended to be applied to boats of the "Myrtle" description.

The frequent assertion that such vessels are intended to be engaged in copra and *bêche-de-mer* trade is generally mere pretence. Even were it otherwise, the employment of such small craft operates as a temptation or provocation to the savages of the islands among which they move to commit murder and robbery. Generally speaking, these small craft are employed in carrying natives about from place to place as labourers for plantation work. They are seldom seen or heard of unless some missionary reports their illegal proceedings, or a naval officer learns that some unknown white men have been murdered and their vessel seized by some obscure savages in some probably inaccessible place.

While savages are not justified (any more than other people) in robbery or murder because of the smallness of a vessel or the weakness of her crew, I do not think temptation should be put in their way, and I am of opinion that licenses should not be issued to any vessels the registered tonnage of which is under 50 tons. I think it should also be considered whether a license should be issued to the master of a ship where, as in the case of McLeod, the owner is not living under any civilised or recognised Government.

If reference is made to the Mercantile Navy List for 1890, p. 493, it will be observed that the "Magic," of Sydney, New South Wales, and 49 tons register, is owned by Peter Pratt Edmonds, of the "Solomon Islands, South Sea Islands." This person came into the Pacific, I am informed, with the celebrated Marquis de Ray. Naval officers who have inquired into the character of Edmonds give him a very bad one, and I believe correctly so. I am not aware that this man ever possessed a license, but there is no reason to suppose that he would fail in procuring one where McLeod succeeded.

If the vessels commanded by men to whom a license was granted by a Governor were not less than 50 tons register, it would be necessary to employ at least some white seamen; and this would be an advantage. I have known small vessels like the "Myrtle," before referred to, sailing among the islands with a European master and mate only, all the rest of the crew being natives. Not only does this add to the ease with which such ships can be taken by the islanders and plundered, but, as the President of the New South Wales Marine Board says, there is "no means of checking" any of the illegal proceedings after leaving port. The two Europeans have only to swear to the same plausible story, while the unsworn evidence of the natives is taken only "for what it is worth." Nor would I grant a license to any master of a vessel who was not a British subject.

In the case of the enclosed license both master and mate were, judging by their names, Scandinavians. If naturalised in either of the colonies, they could urge, if brought before a British tribunal (as Edmund Pratt Edwards did in a petition recently addressed to the High Commissioner), that they were the subjects of a foreign State.

LICENSE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES AT SEA.

REINHOLD FREDERIC ERICKSON, master of the "Myrtle," the vessel more particularly described below, having shown to my satisfaction that he is engaged in the industry of collecting *bêche-de-mer* and other island produce in connection with such vessel, and having given the bond to Her Majesty required by the Pacific Islanders' Protection Acts, 1872 and 1875, I, the Governor of the Colony of